CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.862
23 January 2001

Original: ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 23 January 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Christopher Westdal (Canada)

GE.01-60262 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 862nd plenary meeting of the Conference and the first part of its 2001 session.

As you know, a memorial service is being held today in Kinshasa for the late President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who was assassinated last week. On this sad occasion, I would like to convey, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, our condolences to the family of the late President Kabila, as well as to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the outset, I should like to bid farewell to those colleagues who have left Geneva since we adjourned in September, namely, Ambassadors Hewa S. Palihakkara of Sri Lanka, Iftekhar Chowdhury of Bangladesh, Suh-Ochir Bold of Mongolia and Mohammed Al Douri of Iraq, and to wish them every possible success in their new assignments, as well as happiness for them and their families.

I would also like to extend our welcome to new colleagues who have assumed their responsibilities as representatives of their Governments in the Conference since we adjourned in September, namely, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia, Ambassador Mykhailo Skuratovskyi of Ukraine and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka. We look forward to working with them all in pursuing our common goals.

I should also like to welcome the presence among us today of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala. I am sure we are all grateful to him for his abiding interest in our endeavours and for his support to the Conference.

I turn now to my opening statement as President of the Conference. I should like to express my gratitude to my predecessors who during the course of last year grappled with many of the same issues as those before us now. I mention particularly Mr. Petko Draganov of Bulgaria, in whose work I was fully involved and with whom I participated in inter-sessional consultations which provided valuable insights for my own presidency. I am also grateful to be able to rely upon the able and professional support of Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, to whom, here at his first plenary, I say a special word of welcome, as well as to all other members of the secretariat staff.

In its report to the General Assembly for the 2000 session (CD/1627), the Conference requested that, in order to promote progress during the 2001 session, my predecessor and I should conduct appropriate consultations during the inter-sessional period and make recommendations, if possible, that could help the Conference commence early work on various agenda items, recognizing the support of the Conference for CD/1624, which we call the "Amorim proposal", as a basis for further intensified consultations. It was also specified in paragraph 36 that those consultations should, inter alia, take into account proposals and views presented and discussions held in the 2000 session.

(The President)

I would like now to report briefly on the outcome of those consultations to date, reviewing some of the issues at stake from the vantage point of the President; I want to seek your mandate to continue this work, to complete the current cycle of talks and seek progress beyond; and I want to urge all delegations meanwhile to take advantage of our early plenaries to make worthy use of the political capacity of the Conference and its power to influence the perceptions and the policies of member States.

As mandated and instructed, I have been active. In New York, during the First Committee session, and after that in Washington, London, Beijing, Paris, Moscow and here in Geneva, I have consulted intensively.

I have naturally found great frustration among delegations that the Conference has not been used to much purpose at all for years now. They feel that they have real value to add, that there is vital non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament progress available here and that they are being prevented from achieving it. They find this waste of opportunity disheartening (not to speak of how they feel about the waste of their time and professional energies).

I have also found confirmation of the value invested in CD/1624, the work programme proposed by Ambassador Amorim last August. Representing the result of years of hard work and refinement and designed to reflect and accommodate the diverse views and interests of all members, the programme's virtues are considerable. It would provide scope for profound exploration, discussion and negotiation and offer widespread benefits and satisfactions. It would draw attention to the Conference on Disarmament, enhance its value as a platform and negotiating forum and give us fresh means of credibility and some currency convertible in public and political impact. It would give the media some content to cover, a story worth reporting. And it would be timely, now with a whole session ahead and the issues involved so prominent in international affairs.

This deep respect for the proposal notwithstanding, I must add that I have also confirmed that several parties have reservations and problems with the proposal and are not yet prepared to join a consensus in its favour. You know much about these problems. They have been well described here by the parties who perceive and define them. I will not rehearse them anew.

I do though want to emphasize that in none of my consultations have I found closed minds. I have heard references to "bottom lines", of course, and everyone knows that every word of both the text and the accompanying statement before us has been painstakingly chosen to aim for consensus, so texts are relatively static, but minds are nowhere closed to fresh textual analyses, and equally or more important, minds are not at all closed to the currently highly dynamic context in which our search for consensus proceeds, a context of complex, changing strategic and tactical considerations for all parties.

Of course, there is more at stake than merely the fate of CD/1624. Given widespread concern about tendencies to unilateralism or quite selective multi-polarity, the future course of multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament in general and of this institution in particular are seen as well to hang in the balance.

(The President)

The general view bears repeating that this Conference is vitally important to our shared hopes for stricter arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. Its rationale - that everyone's fate is everyone's business - is a rock. Its mandate to negotiate is unique and necessary. And it is critically inclusive. The four States in the world which have not joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) are all here as equal stakeholders. The major Powers are all here, ready - from time to time - to talk, to explore and to negotiate. Indeed, given widespread concerns about global strategic stability and fear of new arms races, it is surely a striking anomaly that the means of engagement available here are currently almost entirely unused.

I seek and will assume your mandate to try hard to do something about that, to put this place back to work. As President, I am highly conscious of our responsibility for the quality of the multilateral options available to States seeking common security, our responsibility for the quality and capacity of the multilateral track forward. There is little point in blaming tools for their lack of use. We do not have the power here to make the decisions required to have us proceed with a programme of work. But it is our direct responsibility here to create and keep on offer the best possible multilateral option we can devise to achieve common non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament goals. My judgement, widely shared, is that CD/1624 - or something very close to it - remains the best option available and further, that it would indeed represent a worthy fulfilment of our fundamental responsibility in this Conference.

We are all of us frustrated, naturally, but as we carry on, I think we would be wise to modulate and channel our impatience creatively. We have little appetite for waiting idle, and none at all for impassivity. But a realistic perspective is critical and patience a necessary virtue, even for those whose aims here have long been frustrated.

This is after all a brand new day - if not indeed still a brand new millennium. This year's session is not yet an hour old. Critical new players were sworn in three days ago. In these real circumstances, it would surely be misguided, in certain key respects, to be impatient that we do not have an entirely agreed work programme. Whatever we make of the pace of the past, however hard we wring our hands, we will have no choice but to start from where we are now.

With your support, I will complete the current cycle of talks and sustain the search for consensus. I will of course keep you informed of my perceptions and my efforts - and of any progress they may yield.

I urge all delegations meanwhile to put our Conference to immediate good use, the lack of an agreed work programme notwithstanding. I must note in this context that the speakers lists for our plenaries are very short, and I must worry what signal that sends. I urge all to use these plenaries to share assessments of CD/1624 and the way forward in current global security circumstances. And beyond, I urge its use to seek common ground, to serve interests we all share - weapon and non-weapon State alike, NPT party and non-party together, States from all the groups and regions, all as one, eye-to-eye here, gathered to try to serve our security in this conference with community, trust and verified multilateral action - so that we might all feel much less inclined to try to serve it elsewhere with arms.

(The President)

More figuratively still, I urge you to use this unique forum to express the health in us, the dignity and the will, that we might here gain an upper hand against the grave dangers which confront us, that we might here together deepen our perceptions of common, global, multilateral security interests and here create and use fresh means to sustain, protect and promote them.

This rhetoric would be very appropriately made real in a decision by consensus to adopt a programme of work as ambitious as that of CD/1624, with its coverage of fissile material for weapons, security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and nuclear disarmament, along with transparency, anti-personnel mines and CD membership, agenda and functioning. It is a mouthful worth speaking. All of it would be work very highly worth doing.

When he addressed our Conference two years ago, President Jiang Zemin offered a vision we should all strive to fulfil. He quoted the Tang dynasty poet Li Bai: "A time will come to ride the wind, cleave the waves, I will set my cloud-white sail and cross the sea which raves."

The sea raves. I think the time has come to set our cloud-white sail, to ride and to cleave ... to plough on dauntless and plane when we can.

And planing right along, I should now like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, to read us a message addressed to the Conference by Mr. Kofi Annan.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, has asked me to deliver the following message on the occasion of the opening of the Conference on Disarmament, and I quote:

> "The Conference on Disarmament is a unique forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. And you are opening your 2001 session at a unique time in multilateral diplomacy. At last year's Millennium Summit, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter, and their resolve to acting on the most pressing challenges of our age. The Millennium Declaration spelt out the need to work for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction - particularly nuclear weapons - and for an end to the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The Declaration of the Security Council's Summit stressed the critical importance of disarmament in the context of post-conflict situations.
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> "Also last year, the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted by consensus - for the first time in 15 years - a final document on the Treaty's implementation. Further progress was achieved in the negotiations on a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. The Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, and the second annual conference of States Parties to the amended Protocol II to the Convention

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

on Certain Conventional Weapons, gave new impetus to efforts to eliminate landmines and to mitigate their tragic effects. And preparations for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects entered a crucial stage.

"And yet, in that same millennium year, the Conference on Disarmament was once again unable to reach consensus on a comprehensive programme of work. Persistent disagreement on priorities prevented you from agreeing on appropriate mechanisms to deal with both nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. There was no progress in negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Overall, the lack of consensus led to a stalemate which is a source of considerable concern to me and an indication that this Conference has been unable to live up to its full potential.

"We must take firm and concerted action to overcome this state of affairs. We must work for a political climate conducive to the full use of this Conference as a negotiating forum. This requires restoring a necessary degree of harmony among the main players. Only then will the Conference be able to strike the right balance between the disarmament priorities of all Member States - in particular those related to consolidation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the process of nuclear disarmament - while preserving and enhancing strategic stability.

"I would urge all members of the Conference to consider the many intellectual and political resources at your disposal. You remain the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community. No other forum has so many disarmament experts and such accumulated knowledge in this field. Your members include 15 States that maintain missions dealing exclusively with disarmament and headed by ambassadors for disarmament. Your representative membership puts you in the unique and privileged position of negotiating outcomes that could be truly universally adhered to and effectively implemented.

"The first task before you as you open this session, therefore, is to overcome the disturbing lack of political will that prevents you from making full use of those resources. Last year, the Conference did make commendable progress in developing consensus on the appropriate mechanisms to deal with two outstanding issues: nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space. I urge you to follow up on this process with determination. I urge you to use it to build a critical mass of political will that could trigger agreement on a workable and balanced programme of work addressing the priorities and concerns of all States. I am convinced that if you adopt a results-based approach, you will succeed. Such an approach that has already proved effective in many areas, including some related to disarmament. It has also been a cornerstone of the process to strengthen the United Nations as a whole.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

"For my part, I pledge that the United Nations will do all it can to support the endeavours of the Conference. I add the hope that in this year of 2001, we will move from words to deeds and see the results of a truly productive and successful session."

Mr. President, while I have the floor, I would like to make some remarks on some organizational aspects of our Conference.

As in previous years, the Conference will be allocated 10 meetings per week. Accordingly, the Conference will be able to hold two meetings daily, with full services, throughout the session. I hardly need to emphasize that it is essential that the Conference make the best possible use of the resources allocated to it. In this connection, I should like to remind you also that punctuality in starting meetings is very important. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that meetings with full services cannot be held in the evening or during weekends.

The Conference will continue to have at its disposal the Council Chamber, room 1, room C-108 and the secretariat conference room on the sixth floor. If needed, an additional conference room may also be provided. When such facilities are needed for consultations, delegations are kindly requested to coordinate their use in advance through the secretariat.

With regard to documentation, you should be aware that the capacity of the language services is still stretched to its limits. Therefore, the measures already observed by the Conference concerning the most rational and economic issuance and the use of documentation continue to be relevant. In particular, all documents need to be presented well in advance and duplication of documentation should be avoided. In this respect, I should like to once again draw the attention of the Conference to the fact that the United Nations regulations do not permit the translation and distribution of statements delivered by delegations in plenary meetings as separate Conference documents, since they are already reproduced in the verbatim records which are part and parcel of the documentation of the Conference. I am sure that I can count on your full cooperation in exercising every restraint wherever possible in the conduct of documentation.

I would also like to recall that, as part of the secretariat's efforts to reduce operating costs as of March 1996, only documents containing draft proposals which require action will be circulated in meeting rooms. Pre-session and reference documents will continue to be supplied to the permanent and observer missions. Therefore, delegations are kindly requested to keep the copies they receive throughout the annual session and use them during the meetings. Nevertheless, a limited number of documents will be available from the documents distribution counter in room C-111.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Last, but not least, I would like to remind delegations to send me their letters of accreditation as soon as possible, so that the secretariat may issue passes granting access to the conference rooms, as well as the list of participants. Delegations are kindly requested to carry with them either their Conference on Disarmament passes or at least their identification provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Petrovsky, for that administrative information and for the message from the Secretary-General. I would be grateful if you would convey our appreciation for his contribution and for the importance that we know he attaches to our work.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has also sent me a communication transmitting all the resolutions on disarmament and international security measures adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, including those addressing specific requests to this Conference. That communication has been distributed by the secretariat as document CD/1633.

I have no speakers on my list for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see the representative of Germany. Ambassador Seibert, you have the floor.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Mr. President, it is a particular pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We are all aware of the strong commitment of Canada to arms control and disarmament in all areas. Your country has played a decisive role in many forums, especially in one major achievement of the recent past, the treaty to ban anti-personnel mines, fittingly called the Ottawa Treaty.

I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome new colleagues in this Conference, as well as the new Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Roman-Morey. I am looking forward to cooperating closely with all of them. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, who is with us today.

The first presidency of the Conference's session is the most difficult and the most challenging one. According to the ambitious goals of the Conference as set out in its decision CD/1036, the Conference is supposed to take the major decisions on its work, that is, on its agenda, the programme of work and the creation of subsidiary bodies, within the first two weeks of its session. So your task is truly a daunting one. You are called upon to achieve within two weeks what the Conference has not been able to achieve during the past two years. It might seem to be a "mission impossible", but it must be undertaken. You can count on the fullest support of the German delegation for your efforts to overcome the stalemate of the last years and to achieve the earliest possible resumption of substantive work in this Conference.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

The first decision that this Conference is supposed to take is on its agenda. One year ago, at the first plenary of last year's session I already expressed misgivings on the way the agenda had been handled in the past. I pointed out that the agenda was not only outdated but that it had lost all practical significance for the work of this Conference. During the last two years no substantial work has taken place on any of the items of the agenda. There has been no true discussion in the plenary on any of these items, and no subsidiary bodies to negotiate or to prepare the ground for future negotiations have been created. I do not want to repeat in detail what I said a year ago, as I consider it quite obvious that the Conference must discuss and try to deal with this unsatisfactory situation if we do not achieve an early breakthrough. What is, after all, the purpose of an agenda, if we first have to adopt a so-called programme of work before we even can have a substantive debate on the items on the agenda? Furthermore, the decision on the agenda that we have adopted for the last four years refers to consultations on the review of its agenda and states that the decision is "without prejudice to their outcome". Nevertheless, no such consultations have taken place at all during the last two years. This does not enhance the credibility of the decisions of this Conference.

There seems to be general agreement in this Conference that these questions have to be dealt with. In fact, the proposals on a so-called programme of work put forward by successive presidents last year include the appointment of special coordinators on the review of the agenda and the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. On these, as on other items of those proposals, general agreement has existed for quite some time. No decisions have been taken, however, due to the two major outstanding issues of which we are all aware. Even on these two issues, there exists a general agreement that they should be dealt with in appropriate subsidiary bodies. Only the designation and the mandates of such subsidiary bodies apparently remain controversial. If all delegations were to resist the temptation to attempt to prejudge the outcome of our work even before it has started, we could start work very soon. I can assure you, Mr. President, that - as in the past - the German delegation will be very flexible on these matters.

The first objective of this Conference must be to get down to substantive work as soon as possible. Germany will support efforts to achieve this aim. We strongly prefer to concentrate on the major substantive issues and to avoid procedural debates. If we do not succeed, however, in achieving progress towards this goal during your presidency, we do believe that the Conference will urgently have to re-examine the way it conducts its business and the role and relevance of its present agenda.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Seibert, for your contribution and for your kind words and expression of support to me. Are there other speakers who wish to take the floor now? If not, I intend to invite the Conference to consider in an informal plenary meeting the draft agenda for the 2001 session, as contained in document CD/WP.514, which has been distributed this morning and is familiar to you, as well as the requests received from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work during this session, as contained in document CD/WP.513, which has also been distributed this morning.

(The President)

Thereafter - that is, after our informal session - we shall resume this plenary meeting in order to formalize any agreements reached at the informal plenary. I therefore suspend briefly the plenary and convene an informal meeting open only to members of the Conference, in order to consider the draft agenda and the requests received from non-members. We will suspend for a couple of minutes to allow the other delegations and visitors to leave the room.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m.

The meeting was resumed at 11.05 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 862nd plenary meeting is now resumed.

I propose that we deal with the two subjects that were anticipated and that we have just discussed informally, in the order in which we discussed them informally. Accordingly, I will draw your attention first to CD/WP.513, to which are attached the requests from the 34 non-members who have asked to participate. I will, for the record, again read those 34 States and propose that they be granted the right to participate: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Gabon, Georgia, Greece, the Holy See, Iceland, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, Nepal, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Zambia.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure? I see no objections.

It was so decided.

Second, I move to the question of the agenda and, in accordance with the discussion that we have just had informally, I draw your attention to CD/WP.514, which we would now formally amend, again, replacing the words "pending the conclusion of its consultations" with the words "deciding to resume its consultations".

As I have intimated, I will make a statement to the effect that it is my understanding that if there is a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with within this agenda. Is there agreement to the agenda thus revised and thus accompanied by the statement I have just made? I see no objections.

It was so decided.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, in the context of the statement which you have just made, along with the adoption of the agenda, I would like to make a short statement of our understanding.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Mr. President, you have just made a statement following the adoption of the agenda that the Conference on Disarmament is not precluded from taking up other issues under the present agenda. In this context I would like to stress that the international community has now fully accepted the proposition that arms control and disarmament matters at the global level must be complemented by measures at the regional and subregional levels. This in fact reflects the specific dynamics of the arms races in various parts of the world. Both global and regional disarmament must therefore be pursued simultaneously.

The General Assembly has called upon the Conference on Disarmament, in resolution 55/33P, to negotiate principles for arms control at the regional and subregional levels. My delegation intends to pursue this proposal and the recommendations of the General Assembly within the Conference on Disarmament under an appropriate agenda item.

The PRESIDENT: If there are no other speakers I shall take it that our business is concluded. The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday of this week, 25 January, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV 862/Corr 1
9 February 2001

ENGLISH ONLY

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Corrigendum

Cover page

The date in the sub-title should read "Tuesday, 23 January 2001"

Page 10, paragraph 3

The line should read "The meeting was resumed at 11.00 a.m."

GE.01-60416 (E)

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.863
25 January 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 25 January 2001, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Christopher Westdal (Canada)

GE.01-60269 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 863rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend a particularly warm welcome, on behalf of all of us, to the visiting Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Inamul Haque. His presence among us today demonstrates the long-lasting commitment of his Government to our common goals and the continued importance that it clearly attaches to the work of the Conference.

The Foreign Secretary is on my list of speakers today and he is joined on that list by the representative of Latvia. Should others wish to add their names to the list, please inform the secretariat.

I shall proceed with that list then. It is a great pleasure for me to invite the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan to address us.

Mr. HAQUE (Pakistan): I should perhaps begin by thanking the distinguished representative of Latvia for having joined me this morning in addressing the Conference, for I would otherwise have been a very lonely voice in this august forum.

Mr. President, may I begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You have assumed this office at a very challenging moment. Given Canada's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, and your experience and diplomatic skills, we are confident that your stewardship will make a significant contribution to the work of the Conference.

The delegation of Pakistan also acknowledges the invaluable contributions made by your predecessors in promoting agreement on the Conference's work programme, especially by two distinguished representatives from the Group of 21, Ambassador Dembri of Algeria and Ambassador Amorim of Brazil.

Together with the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, the Conference on Disarmament is an indispensable multilateral forum for the promotion and preservation of international peace and security. It has the important mandate of working on the elimination of the most dangerous weapons, including nuclear weapons, and the reduction and control of armaments globally. Bilateral or multilateral endeavours outside the Conference on Disarmament do not legally or politically constrain or restrict the Conference's mandate as the sole disarmament negotiating forum. As such, and bound by the United Nations Charter's principles of sovereign equality, the Conference on Disarmament must be responsive to the security needs of all States, large or small. In practical terms, this means that all States and peoples have the right to be free from the threat of aggression, destruction or annihilation. The realization of this universal goal is the great challenge to which the international community, and especially this august body, must respond with vision and courage.

The current session of the Conference opens during a leadership transition in the world's leading Power. Pakistan welcomes the assumption of office by President George W. Bush. We are reassured that his Administration's external and defence affairs have been entrusted to people with vast experience and proven capability. Their decisions and actions will inevitably have

(Mr. Haque, Pakistan)

major implications for the process of arms control and disarmament, including for the work of this Conference. Thirty years ago, the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union reached the conclusion that the deployment of anti-ballistic missile defences would erode the stability of mutual strategic deterrence between them. This conclusion, reflected in the ABM Treaty, is now being questioned, in part because of the improvements in ballistic missile defence capabilities and the collapse of the bipolar world. The issue requires careful examination, in view of the major implications it is likely to have not only for strategic stability between the parties to the ABM Treaty but for other countries and regions.

Most countries, and the international disarmament community, remain unconvinced that the abrogation or amendment of the ABM Treaty and the deployment of national missile defence (NMD) systems are the advisable course to enhance international or national security. If one or more States decide to create "shields" against ballistic missiles to protect their national territory, or that of their allies and clients, other States are likely to respond by improving and adding to their "lances". Missile defences, both national missile defence and theatre missile defence, could therefore heighten tensions between major Powers, jeopardize the global strategic balance and turn back the disarmament clock. A security environment in which only some are secure from the nuclear threat, while others confront a possibly heightened danger, will not contribute to global stability.

We, therefore, believe that, before irrevocable decisions are taken and actions initiated, it would be best to hold a thorough and inclusive debate on the rationale and the consequences of the deployment of ballistic missile defence systems, both at the strategic and the regional levels.

Mr. President, the concerns expressed about missile proliferation should be evaluated from an objective perspective and not from the discriminatory premise that some States have the right to develop, possess, deploy, and use ballistic and cruise missiles, while others, including those targeted by such missiles, must be prevented by all possible means, from acquiring them.

Thousands of long-range, medium-range and short-range missiles are already deployed by the major Powers and their allies. Even after the reductions envisaged under START II and a possible START III, the two major nuclear Powers will retain around 2,500 nuclear warheads each, deliverable by air, land and sea-based delivery systems. This would include missile-mounted nuclear weapons, which are held on high alert and would pose a major threat of a nuclear catastrophe. The first priority therefore should be to address this danger, and the best way of doing so would be first to de-alert and de-activate these weapons, and thereafter proceed to progressively deeper cuts towards the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons agreed to by the five NPT nuclear-weapon States at the last NPT review conference.

Second, we need to address the underlying causes for the acquisition of missiles in other parts of the world. Regional missile development is largely an action-reaction process in an already charged security environment. Each regional situation may thus require a distinct approach which addresses the security concerns of the States involved. In some cases, the role of missiles, especially for countries which do not have access to advanced and unaffordable military aircraft, may be vital to their defensive strategy.

(Mr. Haque, Pakistan)

Third, the introduction of anti-ballistic missile systems into the military equation, at the global or regional level, is likely in itself to accelerate the qualitative improvement and quantitative deployment of "offensive" missiles. Thus, this apparent solution to the problem of missile proliferation may in fact aggravate the problem.

Restricted forums with one-dimensional agendas, like the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which operate on the basis of a selective and, therefore, a discriminatory approach, are unlikely to succeed in promoting comprehensive and durable solutions to the dangers that are posed by the growing role of missiles in the national defence strategies of both the major Powers and other countries. Nor can such a forum address the issue of the acquisition and deployment of anti-ballistic missiles. In our view, therefore, the Conference on Disarmament is an appropriate forum for a consideration of the multifaceted ramifications of the issue of missile and anti-missile systems for international and regional stability and security.

The Parties to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty are committed to using outer space for the benefit of all peoples, irrespective of the degree of their economic or scientific development. Outer space has been declared the province of all humankind. Today, there is heightened and legitimate concern that outer space could be further militarized through a proliferation of intelligence and communications assets. There is now, also, a real possibility of the actual deployment of space-based defensive and offensive weapons systems. It has thus become imperative for the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate legal and political instruments against the weaponization of outer space.

Mr. President, my delegation is encouraged by your sincere and energetic efforts to build consensus on a work programme for the Conference on Disarmament. Pakistan maintains a constructive and flexible approach on this issue. We hope that the Conference can agree on a work programme this year.

Pakistan welcomes the emerging consensus that the Conference on Disarmament should establish four ad hoc committees to deal with nuclear disarmament, fissile materials, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. We trust that the differences regarding the specific wording of the mandates of some of these committees will be resolved soon.

I wish to reiterate that Pakistan remains committed to negotiations on a fissile materials treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. We will seek to address and resolve some of the issues of unequal stockpiles within the framework of these negotiations. I should add that the evolution in south Asia's security environment will have a direct bearing on our position on this treaty and its various elements.

South Asia has been described as "the most dangerous place in the world". Pakistan wishes the region to be rid of this ominous appellation. We cannot, however, do it alone. South Asia can become a region of peace and progress through a commitment on the part of both India and Pakistan to resolve the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, which lies at the heart of the problems between the two countries, through peaceful negotiations based on the principles of international law, of the United Nations Charter and of the relevant resolutions of the

Security Council. India and Pakistan have, in the past, gone to war on this issue. We believe that, in the context of present day realities, it is essential to take steps to defuse tensions over Kashmir and to launch the process for a just and peaceful solution to the dispute.

Pakistan has made persistent efforts to promote this objective. The Chief Executive of Pakistan has offered to resume the dialogue with India at any time, at any level and at any place. In December 2000, Pakistan declared that it would unilaterally exercise maximum restraint along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir. There is greater tranquillity today all along the line. This is recognized by India as well. Pakistan has also unilaterally withdrawn sizable forces from forward positions on the line of control.

India's announced suspension of military operations against the Kashmiri freedom fighters will be meaningful only if it is combined with a purposeful dialogue for the peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir, an end to repression and violence against the Kashmiri people, reduction of Indian forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir, release of all detainees and respect for the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people.

While unfortunately India has continued to avoid a dialogue with Pakistan and has sought to impose unacceptable preconditions on a resumption of dialogue, Pakistan has sought ways and means of promoting dialogue. In our statement of 2 December 2000, announcing maximum restraint on the line of control, we also proposed that the Executive Committee of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), the representative of the Kashmiri people, should be allowed to travel to Pakistan preparatory to a tripartite dialogue. We also suggested to India that it undertake similar consultations with the Executive Committee of APHC. We believe that discussions by APHC with Pakistan and India would help launch a process for a final settlement of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmiri people welcomed this proposal and the APHC leadership nominated a five-member delegation to visit Pakistan. Unfortunately, India has held up the process by seeking to determine the composition of the Kashmiri delegation through the stratagem of refusing travel documents to some of the Kashmiri leaders.

Pakistan hopes that the Indian Government will review its approach and allow the delegation nominated by APHC to visit Pakistan and will agree expeditiously to the resumption of a dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir. It is only through a credible peace process and genuine reduction of repression by Indian security forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir that the Kashmiri people will be able to breathe in peace and decide their future in accordance with their own aspirations. We fear that, if not seized quickly, even this opportunity may be lost because of the approach and attitude of India.

Apart from the urgent action required to avoid conflict over Kashmir and to promote a peaceful solution to this long-standing dispute, it is essential to take steps to arrest nuclear and conventional arms build-up in south Asia. Instead of a triad of nuclear forces Pakistan seeks a triad of peace, security and progress. To this end we suggest, first, the resumption of high-level talks between India and Pakistan to discuss and resolve the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, which is the core issue between the two countries as well as other outstanding disputes and

differences; second, a Strategic Restraint Regime, involving measures for nuclear restraint and conventional balance; and, third, high-level interaction for the promotion of trade, transit arrangements, development cooperation and investment generation.

In this forum, I will dwell only on the strategic restraint regime as we visualize it.

Prior to India's 1998 nuclear tests, Pakistan was prepared to live with so-called "existential deterrence". In our now nuclearized region, Pakistan believes it would be best to preserve mutual deterrence at the lowest possible level. Pakistan will not enter an arms race with India. If, however, India continues to move up the nuclear ladder, Pakistan may be compelled to take the steps necessary to preserve the credibility of its deterrence. We are prepared to discuss, in fairly specific terms, our requirements for a minimum credible nuclear deterrence, if India is prepared to do so. Yet if the well publicized Indian nuclear doctrine is any indication of the future direction of India's nuclear programme and ambitions, it should be a matter of deep concern for the international community, as it is for us. New Delhi has claimed that the nuclear doctrine is a non-official document. Yet India has not disavowed the ambitious goals and plans for a triad of land, air and sea-based delivery systems, which could entail the acquisition of several hundred nuclear weapons.

Pakistan is prepared for reciprocal agreements with India for nuclear and missile restraint. These could include agreements, first, not to deploy ballistic missiles; second, not operationally to weaponize nuclear capable missile systems; third, to formalize the understanding that prior and adequate notification should be provided of flight-tests of missiles; and, fourth, to declare a moratorium on the development, acquisition or deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems, since these can destabilize what is known as minimum credible deterrence.

Such measures of nuclear restraint will be much more effective in preventing the possible use of nuclear weapons than a mere declaration of no-first use, which has been used by our neighbour as a justification for acquiring a larger nuclear arsenal on the basis of the argument that this would be needed to develop a second-strike capability.

Nuclear restraint agreements between India and Pakistan could be accompanied by political and technical confidence-building measures. Bilateral arrangements can be envisaged for the credibility and confirmation of mutual nuclear restraint measures, including through agreed monitoring mechanisms. Such arrangements should also include enhancing the effectiveness of the command and control systems by each country. The two countries could establish round-the-clock communications between designated authorities with a view to ensuring crisis stability and management and precluding any misunderstandings regarding strategic assets.

Mutual nuclear restraint between India and Pakistan will have to be built on a balance in the conventional forces and the capabilities of the two countries. An imbalance in conventional capabilities will obviously be destabilizing. The 28 per cent increase in India's defence budget in 2000 is by itself equal to the entire defence budget of Pakistan. India seeks to justify its huge defence outlays by pointing to its long borders. The fact remains, however, that almost all

(Mr. Haque, Pakistan)

India's military assets are deployed against Pakistan. If India continues its conventional arms build-up, Pakistan will be compelled to recalibrate its defence planning in order effectively to reduce the heightened threat of conventional conflict.

India's conventional arms build-up will not promote the preservation of peace in south Asia and the Indian Ocean. It could well threaten it. An ambitious nuclear programme coupled with a massive conventional arms build-up will only point to a policy of seeking regional hegemony, which will provoke concern and reaction throughout the region.

Conventional arms control is, therefore, essential to preserve the stability of nuclear deterrence in south Asia and to reduce wasteful defence expenditures. Pakistan has made specific proposals to promote these objectives, including a mutually agreed ratio of forces between India and Pakistan, measures to increase mutual confidence and elimination of the threat of surprise attack and pre-emptive strikes by either country. These proposals, and others that seek to promote regional stability, should be considered by India and Pakistan in bilateral talks and in multilateral mechanisms that should be created to elaborate the new security architecture for south Asia.

Mr. President, the three pillars of south Asian peace, security and progress, which I mentioned earlier, namely: a high-level dialogue to resolve Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding disputes, a mechanism to promote trade and economic cooperation, and a strategic restraint regime, would complement, sustain, support and reinforce one another.

Through sincere and persistent efforts, we can, indeed, we must, create the conditions for durable peace and enhanced prosperity for the thirteen hundred million people of south Asia.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Foreign Secretary Haque, for that thoughtful and important statement and for the kind words that you have addressed to me, and I turn now to the distinguished representative of our new participant, Latvia. Counsellor Jansons, you have the floor.

Mr. JANSONS (Latvia): On behalf of the delegation of Latvia, and since this is the first time that my delegation has participated in this important forum, I wish to express our appreciation of the decision to grant observer status to the Latvian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, Latvia shares the concerns and expectations of the international community with regard to international peace and stability. We are ready to assume our part of responsibility in this endeavour. Latvia views the Conference on Disarmament as the world's principal multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and a vital mechanism for moving forward the multilateral arms control and disarmament agenda.

Despite certain difficulties during the last years, the Conference can be proud of many outstanding achievements in the past. Allow me to single out among these the major multilateral arms limitation and disarmament agreements which have been negotiated by the Conference and to which Latvia is a State party, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

(Mr. Jansons, Latvia)

Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Latvia has signed and is planning this year to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Latvia also actively participates in the review conferences of the existing multilateral arms control and disarmament instruments. This demonstrates Latvia's commitment to contributing to the global implementation of the aforementioned agreements and promoting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to express the hope that, during this session, the Conference will make a decisive breakthrough in the stalemate that has persisted in the last years and to assure you of the active participation of the Latvian delegation in the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes my list of speakers for today. India would like to take the floor. Ambassador Sood, you have the floor.

Mr. SOOD (India): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time during this session under your presidency, may I take this opportunity to convey our pleasure at seeing you in the chair. We know that you bring to this responsibility a vast experience and dedication, and I would also like to assure you of our fullest cooperation in discharging the responsibilities at this particular juncture. I have asked for the floor with some reluctance as it is the first time I take the floor during the session, but I felt compelled to do so in order to bring out certain facts which I felt had not perhaps been adequately brought out in the statement made by the distinguished Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.

The first point that I should like to make is that India has been and remains the initiator of dialogue with Pakistan. In fact, the Simla Agreement and the composite dialogue process, which was agreed to a few years ago, commit both countries to dialogue, and I had the privilege of being part of the initiation of the composite dialogue process. It was in that context that in 1999 the Indian Prime Minister took the bold initiative of the bus journey from Delhi to Lahore, which led to the signing of the Lahore Declaration, with which, I am sure, members of this Conference are familiar, as well as the eight-point memorandum of understanding between the then foreign secretaries. Once again, I had the privilege of being part of the advance team which negotiated both the memorandum of understanding and the Lahore Declaration. It was unfortunate that the bus to Lahore got hijacked to Kargil.

I think it is important to accept one basic fact: that dialogue requires the building up of trust, and trust is not built by engaging in dialogue in winter and committing aggression in spring. It is not built by sponsoring terrorism across borders. More fundamentally, it is not built by seeking to change the status quo through military means, overt or covert.

In India, we realize one basic fact: that we have to accept geography as it is. We are a neighbour of Pakistan, and we are also fully aware of many of the problems that violence has created in the society of Pakistan. The implications of this violence are not lost on India: the

(Mr. Sood, India)

fact that today in Pakistan an AK47 is cheaper than a sack of flour, the fact that there may be more than 8 or 9 million Kalashnikovs unlicensed in Pakistan or that the number of "madrassas" in the last 25 years has increased from 900 to more than 12,000.

These are figures that cause us concern, and it is for this reason that, while we accept that many of these have implications for us, we have not closed the door on dialogue with Pakistan. We have said, however, that Pakistan needs to demonstrate its commitment to dialogue more effectively - more meaningfully - than it has done in the past. We remain committed to bringing peace in the region. The announcement made by the Prime Minister of India in November - that the Indian security forces would not initiate combat operations against terrorists during the holy month of Ramadan - was made precisely with a view to creating such an environment to promote dialogue. That particular directive has been renewed twice, once at the end of December and the last time on 23 January. This is in an attempt to bring about the necessary conditions for some element of dialogue to be resumed.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the ceasefire has been extended twice, acts of terrorism and violence continue. We are conscious that there has been a de-escalation on the line of control, as was pointed out by the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan. Yet we need more positive signs, and the promotion, encouragement and abetting of cross-border terrorism has to cease if conditions for dialogue are to be created. While announcing the extension of the ceasefire on 23 January, the External Affairs Minister of India pointed out that such acts "must cease, and activities of terrorist organizations curbed and controlled by Pakistan in order to create a suitable environment for resumption of the composite dialogue process between the two countries".

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Sood, and thank you for the kind words that you have addressed to the chair. Are there other speakers who wish to take the floor? I see the representative of Pakistan. Ambassador Akram, you have the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity, once again, on my own behalf, to extend my congratulations to you on the assumption of the presidency for the Conference at this critical juncture in our work, and I am sure that we will be infected by your enthusiasm and your optimism, and perhaps we may even surprise ourselves by succeeding in the adoption of a work programme this year. I continue to be hopeful, and we shall try to be as helpful as possible in realizing this objective. I would like also, Mr. President, to extend a warm welcome to all my new colleagues, colleagues from Indonesia, from Sri Lanka, and not the least, my distinguished colleague from India, who is an old and dear friend of mine. It is therefore all the more unfortunate that I am obliged to take the floor at this time to respond and qualify some of the points which have been raised in the statement which he just made in response to the statement of our Foreign Secretary.

Mr. President, dialogue between two countries is not a favour that either bestows upon the other. Dialogue is a process which is in the mutual interest of the parties concerned and, certainly, if India wishes peace with Pakistan, it will need to talk to Pakistan, regardless of its value-judgements. We, too, have our value-judgements, and the bus of peace has been hijacked

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

quite often from New Delhi to various places: in 1971, in 1985 when Siachen was occupied and remains occupied by Indian troops, again, on two other occasions when Indian incursions took place along the line of control and have not been vacated.

So I think we can all refer back in our memory banks and raise reasons why we should not be talking to each other. But the fact of the matter is that there is a hot conflict going on in Kashmir between Indian forces and the Kashmiri people, and yes, the people of Pakistan sympathize and support - politically and diplomatically - the just struggle of the Kashmiri for self-determination, and we will continue to do so.

That conflict in Kashmir can be halted very easily, if India withdraws its 700,000-strong army of occupation in Kashmir. The violence in Kashmir arises from the repression of the Kashmiri people. You cannot suppress people, kill their sons and daughters, rape their wives and then say that they are resorting to terrorism. They have every right to fight back in self-defence for their freedom, and that is what they are doing. It is a just struggle, and Pakistan cannot be accused of committing any act of subterfuge by voicing its support for this just struggle of the Kashmiri people.

My colleague has spoken about the ceasefire declared by the Indian Government. According to our reports, this is more of a declaration rather than a ceasefire, because the cordon on the approaches to Srinagar and other towns of occupied Kashmir remains, and reports received only yesterday attest to several such cordons and operations in which innocent Kashmiris have been rounded up and put in jail, and several have died over the past week. So where is this ceasefire, and where is this restraint that was declared in the holy month of Ramadan? For the Muslims of Kashmir, every month is a holy month, but they continue to be oppressed every day, every week and every month.

My distinguished colleague has spoken about the concerns regarding Pakistani society in India. I thank him for that concern, but let me also tell him that we too are deeply concerned about what is happening in the society in India. We are concerned that there are 17 insurgencies taking place across the length and breadth of India, which the Indian army is engaged in suppressing through violent means, and that violence has a consequence, not only on Pakistan, but on every other neighbour of India.

And yes, we too are concerned about the rise of fundamentalism in India, where the party in power is sponsored by a fascist group called the VHP, of which it is an offshoot, a group which was responsible for the destruction of the Babri Mosque, for the killing of over 3,000 Muslims all across India, and whose leaders have likened themselves to the fascists and are great admirers of Hitler, and yet still remain on the loose and are even calling the shots for the Indian Government. There is a concern about fundamentalism and extremism, but in New Delhi fundamentalism holds the reins of power. So yes, we in Pakistan, too, are concerned about the direction of Indian society, especially if these extremist parties go ahead with the construction of the Hindu temple on the site of the destroyed Babri Mosque. If that happens, there will be flames. What happened in Bosnia will look like a picnic by comparison.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

But if there are concerns in India about Pakistan and concerns in Pakistan about India, is it not best that the two countries should be talking to each other? We think so. The world thinks so. But India continues to impede, and impose preconditions for, the resumption of such a dialogue. We urge India to reconsider. We urge it to take the part of rationality and not lapse into irrationality and arrogance.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Ambassador Akram, for your statement and for the kind words that you addressed to the chair. Are there others who wish to take the floor at this stage?

I would like then to invite you to take a decision on the requests of four States - Ghana, Madagascar, Panama and the Republic of Moldova - to participate as observers in the work of the Conference during this session, without first having considered them in an informal plenary. I note these requests in CD/WP.515, which is before you.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Ghana, Madagascar, Panama and the Republic of Moldova to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It is so decided.

Unless there are other speakers who wish to take the floor, our business will be concluded with just one mention that I wish to make concerning the status of the meeting next Tuesday. In my opening remarks to the plenary earlier this week and in some gatherings since and in terms and with a tone that I think some delegations may have found unduly peremptory - for which I apologize - I urged all delegations to put the Conference to immediate good use, despite the fact that we lack an agreed work programme. I particularly expressed my concern that the speakers' lists for our plenaries were very short: that remains the situation. There is no speaker at this point for our meeting on Tuesday. As you will, I think, have heard, at yesterday's presidential consultations, I asked group coordinators to encourage delegations to inscribe their names on the lists of speakers. I believe that general exchange of views - a common feature, after all, of all conferences - would be helpful in creating necessary momentum, and I believe that it might facilitate agreement on a programme of work.

Regardless, I will decide on Monday, at noon, whether or not we should go ahead with Tuesday's plenary. Certainly we will go ahead with next Thursday's plenary, but as to Tuesday's, I will decide midday Monday. I have therefore asked the group coordinators to communicate with me on Monday morning, and I want to encourage you to communicate accordingly with them before then.

Unless there are others wishing to take the floor, that would conclude our business. Seeing none, I declare the 863rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament closed.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.864
1 February 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 1 February 2001, at 10.35 a.m.

President: Mr. Christopher Westdal (Canada)

GE.01-60411 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare the 864th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament open. At the outset, on behalf of the whole Conference, I warmly welcome the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Igor Ivanov, who will be addressing the Conference shortly. I know I speak for all in appreciating this demonstration of the importance attached by the Minister and his Government to our forum and their continued commitment to the multilateral approach to disarmament.

As well, I extend a cordial welcome to Ambassador Horacio Emilio Solari, who has assumed responsibility as the Permanent Representative of Argentina. I look forward to working with him and you together in pursuing our common goals. Ambassador Solari will be the second speaker at this plenary meeting.

I also have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Bulgaria and the Republic of Korea.

As you are all aware, a tragic earthquake struck India's Gujarat state last week, taking a very heavy toll of pain, death, loss and damage. On this sad occasion, on behalf of the Conference, I express sympathy and sincere condolences to survivors and to the Government and the people of India, as well as to survivors and the Government and the people of neighbouring Pakistan, also hit hard by this earthquake.

It is now my honour to invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Igor Ivanov, to address the Conference.

Mr. IVANOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Distinguished Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the era of globalization is irrupting into our lives, forcing us to change our traditional ways and confronting us with increasingly complicated tasks. The international community will only be able to resolve these tasks if it acts jointly and rationally, using the achievements of contemporary science and technology and the world's combined economic and intellectual potential for the benefit of all the States of the globe.

No State, not even that which is most powerful in economic and military terms, can hope on its own to find responses to the new challenges that will threaten international security in the twenty-first century. All attempts to create isolated islands of well-being and stability in today's world are illusory and, in our view, doomed to failure.

This is strikingly demonstrated in the area of disarmament, where all the pros and cons of globalization are shown in clearest relief. For it is precisely the threat of a global nuclear confrontation which overturned our views about the foundations upon which every State should build its security and which paved the way to our laborious disarmament negotiations.

Since its very inception, a key role in this process has been played by multilateral diplomacy and, first and foremost, the United Nations. It is therefore quite legitimate that, even today, we are turning in our search for reliable and concerted responses to present-day challenges to time-tested institutions and mechanisms. In this respect, the Conference on Disarmament and

(Mr. Ivanov, Russian Federation)

the "Geneva process", in general, offer us uniquely valuable experience. It was in this Conference in Geneva that multilateral agreements prohibiting entire classes of weapons of mass destruction were elaborated. It was in Geneva that the most important bilateral agreements were struck, enabling Russia and the United States of America to initiate drastic reductions in strategic offensive arms.

We are strongly convinced that even today the potential of the Conference on Disarmament is far from exhausted. On the contrary, the era of globalization urgently calls for an integrated and multilateral approach to disarmament problems. This means that the search for their solution cannot and should not be the privilege of the narrow circle of nuclear Powers or of States possessing the largest military capabilities. In the contemporary world an arms race - wherever it might emerge - is bound to affect the interests of all States and to influence the general international environment.

Under such conditions the process of disarmament, like global security itself, is becoming global and indivisible in nature. This fact has yet again been graphically demonstrated by the outcome of the United Nations Millennium Summit and Assembly. For the disarmament process to develop in a normal manner, each State should be fully confident that its security is closely linked to that of the whole international community and is underpinned by political arrangements and international legal instruments. In other words, a necessary prerequisite for steady progress towards disarmament is the collective upholding of strategic stability in the world. Let me repeat that: the collective upholding of strategic stability in the world. And this should take place in the broadest sense of this notion, that is, in political, military, economic, humanitarian, environmental and other dimensions. In our view, this is the only way in which a secure and democratic model of the world order can be created that meets the requirements of the modern era.

In short, the very times in which we now live require us to revitalize the work of our Conference in order to conduct a thorough exploration of the military, political and disarmament aspects of strategic stability. The future of any forum and the effectiveness of any decisions it takes depend, however, on the will of its member States and their capacity to seek and find solutions.

The Russian Federation, for its part, is not only ready for this but is also taking definite steps aimed at strengthening global and regional security in all its aspects.

In 2000 the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, approved new versions of our country's blueprint for national security and for foreign policy, which emphasize that our country will strictly observe all its obligations under existing treaties and agreements in the area of arms limitation and reduction. We will continue to play an active part in the elaboration and conclusion of appropriate new agreements ensuring comprehensive strategic stability.

(Mr. Ivanov, Russian Federation)

In the first place, this concerns further measures to reduce the nuclear threat. Fully accepting its responsibility in this area, in the spring of the year 2000 Russia ratified the START-II treaty, which provides for a more than twofold reduction in Russian and American strategic arsenals.

Russia is ready to start negotiations with the United States of America immediately on the development of a START-III treaty. The Russian Federation proposes that the new agreement should provide even deeper reductions of strategic warheads than those already agreed, in other words, down to 1,500 units rather than 2,000-2,500.

But even this, as President Putin stated, is not the limit. We are ready subsequently to consider even lower levels. Agreement on such additional cuts would meet the aspirations of the peoples of the world. It would be in line with the decision of last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Another actual example is the ratification by the Russian Federation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. We hope that the other States on which this treaty's entry into force depends will now follow suit, thus enabling this vital instrument to join those agreements that are already in force.

Such, then, is the extent of specific measures in the area of nuclear disarmament, measures which may be realistically - and I stress: realistically - implemented in the very near future and in that way can give powerful impetus to the whole disarmament process in the world and expand the scope of that process. This process should of course be pursued on the basis of the principle of equal security. It is vital that the other nuclear Powers be involved in it on a multilateral basis.

There is another fundamental issue at stake here. Such large-scale advances can only be achieved on condition that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty is maintained and strengthened. In our opinion, this treaty even now remains one of the pillars of today's architecture in the area of arms control and disarmament.

I do not believe that there is any need to reiterate the arguments of the Russian Federation in support of this instrument so vital to strategic stability. This approach, as shown by the outcome of the vote during recent sessions of the United Nations General Assembly on the resolution supporting the 1972 ABM Treaty, is shared by the great majority of the world's States.

We believe it essential that an active and meaningful dialogue on this topic be resumed with the new United States administration as soon as possible. In this respect, we proceed from the simple truth which was once stated by Seneca: "There are some remedies worse than the disease." As an alternative to a national missile defence system we propose a whole package of constructive, political and diplomatic measures. Their aim is to dispel existing concerns, held not only by the United States, about the so-called "new missile threats", while at the same time preserving the ABM Treaty. These steps include: the creation of a Moscow-based missile

(Mr. Ivanov, Russian Federation)

launch data exchange centre, established by Russia and the United States. Another would be the initiative on a global missile and missile technology non-proliferation control system. And finally, we favour the broad international cooperation open to all States in the area of theatre missile defence which was initiated through a number of arrangements reached by Moscow and Washington over the period 1997-2000.

Russia considers the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world and the non-deployment of nuclear weapons beyond national territories as a substantial contribution to strengthening strategic stability. In this connection, I would like to recall that all the nuclear weapons left outside Russia after the disintegration of the USSR have been brought back to Russian national territory. The cause of non-proliferation will only prevail if all nuclear weapons are concentrated on the territories of the States to which they belong.

Russia also proposes to develop and implement under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) an international project which will make it possible to exclude the use of the primary weapons-grade materials in the area of peaceful energy, namely, enriched uranium and pure plutonium.

I am deliberately giving such close attention to the issues of strengthening strategic stability, since the prospects of finding solutions to problems on the agenda of our Conference largely depend on these issues.

Mr. President, Russia is ready to work actively with you and with the other member States of the Conference in moving forward along the path of nuclear disarmament - in accordance with our own obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Our primary consideration in this respect is that our joint steps be realistic, balanced and definite. On this premise, we support the idea of establishing within the Conference on Disarmament a subsidiary body entrusted with an exploratory mandate for broad discussions on the problems relating to nuclear disarmament.

It is time now to re-establish in the Conference the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty, especially since its mandate was agreed upon in 1995.

If the international non-proliferation regime is to be strengthened, it is essential that the Conference continue work on the agreement on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

A matter of special concern to many States represented at the Conference is the current prospect of an arms race in outer space. That was why we, in company with the overwhelming majority of other States, at the last session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, supported the early start of substantive negotiations on the topic of outer space in our forum in Geneva.

(Mr. Ivanov, Russian Federation)

President Putin's proposal that an international conference on the prevention of an arms race in outer space be convened in the spring of 2001 in Moscow, under the auspices of the United Nations, is a move in the same direction. It is high time that a reliable international legal "safety net" be created in this area. The efforts and resources of our space agencies should be aimed at peaceful - including commercial - cooperation.

If through our joint efforts we can resolve these fundamental issues, we shall create favourable conditions for progress in other important disarmament areas as well, such as the strengthening of various non-proliferation and export control regimes, the prevention of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons and movement towards the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines.

In conclusion, I should like to stress once more that the Russian Federation highly appreciates the role played by the Conference on Disarmament in building a new stable and safe world order and will continue its determined efforts to enhance the Conference's international authority and the effectiveness of its work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for his important and encouraging statement and, given that he must now depart, I request a brief suspension to enable me to escort the Minister from our chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: Our plenary now resumes, and it is my honour to give the floor, for the first time, to the new representative of Argentina, Ambassador Solari.

Mr. SOLARI (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Thank you, Mr. President.

First of all allow me, on behalf of the Argentine delegation, to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of this Conference at this important stage of its work. I wish you every success in your work and pledge the support and unlimited cooperation of my delegation in all your efforts to impart a new dynamism to our forum.

It is for me a special honour to take the floor for the first time in this multilateral forum for disarmament. I would also like to express my gratitude for the very warm words of welcome I received after assuming my functions as head of the Argentine delegation.

Sir, the Argentine Republic subscribes wholeheartedly to the objectives of the overwhelming majority of the international community in the area of nuclear non-proliferation, both those designed to bring about a world free of nuclear weapons and those which aim to place the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy within everyone's reach. With our own actions we are endeavouring to foster disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction because we believe that these genuinely endanger the survival of the entire planet.

(Mr. Solari, Argentina)

To this end a number of measures have been taken, including the accession of our country to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the consensus reached in the NPT Review Conference. We should highlight the value of the work that is being carried out by the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which is a forum of particular importance for establishing a verification regime to strengthen the Convention. We note too, with particular gratification that all South American countries have ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, a significant step towards achieving its universality.

The commitment of Argentina to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is rooted in its conviction that a clear, coherent and resolute policy on this would help strengthen security in the world in general, and in various regions in particular, while at the same time it increases the possibilities of growth and development because it frees resources and potential for peaceful activities that can be used for the benefit of all.

With Brazil it was our clear understanding that this is what we should do. Accordingly, we have opened up our nuclear facilities for each other to inspect, through the Argentine-Brazilian Agency for Accountability and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), and, over the past few years, we have developed a common nuclear policy and together we have given assurances to the international community on the exclusively peaceful purposes of our respective nuclear programmes. This has created enormous scope for bilateral cooperation in this area.

We are concerned that there are countries which, instead of joining in the common endeavour for nuclear Powers to eliminate their stockpiles, have embarked instead on their own plans of acquiring and developing their own nuclear weapons. It is essential that we strive for a safer and better world where we can all prosper and develop. This is not merely a rhetorical flourish or an altruistic notion: this is a practical necessity for us all.

In many parts of the developing world, regional tensions are a constant spur for arms build-up that divert scant and desperately needed resources from development purposes. In our region we have been able to develop the notions of association, convergence and cooperation. This change has been made possible by the full force of representative democracy in Argentina and its neighbours, as well as the ongoing integration process in all those countries. In our region, we have created mechanisms to foster the criteria that I have outlined, we have managed to ban from the entire region all weapons of mass destruction and there has been significant progress in building confidence. The Declaration of MERCOSUR, adopted with Bolivia and Chile under which our area is designated as a zone of peace, is a significant step in this process. This instrument, adopted in Ushuaia in 1998, transforms the MERCOSUR region into a zone where the possibility of armed conflict has been removed. It also embodies the commitment of its members to non-proliferation, to the elimination of certain types of weapon and to the promotion of fundamental values and principles.

(Mr. Solari, Argentina)

We also have mechanisms for coordination and consultation on matters of defence and security with Brazil and Chile and our armed forces carry out joint military exercises with the armed forces of those countries and of Paraguay and Uruguay. Argentine vessels are repaired in Chile and Brazil.

The new security and defence that we are building in the southern cone is based on the defence of shared values. The objective is to protect us all from the scourge that threatens the fundamental values in which we believe and which we strive to uphold.

We live in a world in which dramatic changes are under way and increasing importance is given to the modalities for tackling security issues. In the future, world security will depend on a combination of regional and global initiatives and measures that have been carefully considered. In other words, the deadlock in the work of the Conference on Disarmament will ultimately affect the attainment of collective security and the development of our countries and peoples. The Conference has spent the last four years without carrying out any substantive work. These years have demonstrated the need for a concerted political and diplomatic effort, even more vigorous and all-inclusive than in the past, in order to reach an agreement that will enable the Conference to make headway in multilateral disarmament and weapons control.

The Conference remains the sole platform for global negotiation on disarmament. The Conference likewise is a place for dialogue and transparency. We must recognize, however, that the lack of a programme of work is not in any way attributable to any lack of commitment on the part of the President or delegations. Argentina considers that the adoption of a programme of work based on the proposals made by Ambassador Dembri, Ambassador Lint and Ambassador Amorim would enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the member States and that this would be a sound working basis for the resumption of work by the Conference.

To that end, and to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament emerges from its stalemate and begins work on the substantive issues on its agenda, we should at least start work on the uncontroversial items, with a view to creating better conditions for seeking a mutual and generally acceptable agreement on the outstanding issues.

Argentina manifestly supports general complete nuclear disarmament. Our commitment to this goal is unequivocal. There are various practical steps for the attainment of this goal. These include the signature and necessary ratifications for the early entry into effect of the CTBT and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, with a view to its conclusion over the next five years. The positive outcome of the latest NPT review conference and the United Nations resolution on the issue adopted by consensus in the First Committee, will give impetus to the negotiation of an FMCT. In this connection, we should take care to prevent a discussion on the precise mandate of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament delaying negotiations on cut-off.

Under the Conference's agenda, my delegation would like to refer to the issue of outer space.

(Mr. Solari, Argentina)

Argentina considers that confidence-building measures are one of the cornerstones of stability and security in outer space. The associated problems undoubtedly constitute one of the major stumbling blocks and challenges facing the international community at the beginning of this new century and millennium. Our delegation is ready to support any proposal for the establishment of a subsidiary body or mechanism entrusted with preventing an arms race in outer space and with a mandate conducive to the attainment of consensus in the Conference.

Another of our priorities is that the Conference on Disarmament contribute to transparency in the field of armaments.

Argentina has played an active role in fostering confidence-building measures in general and in particular with regard to conventional weapons. In August 1993, Argentina submitted a proposal to the ad hoc committee on the creation of an international register of compliance with agreements on weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons and chemical and biological weapons.

In the context of the Organization of American States (OAS), Argentina participated in the adoption of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisition, supported by 19 countries at the nineteenth General Assembly of OAS, held in Guatemala in June 1999. This instrument constitutes an excellent confidence-building measure, since its purpose is to bring about greater transparency, predictability and regional stability.

Argentina firmly believes that greater transparency in the domain of weapons, the greater transparency sought by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, would increase confidence, enhance stability and help States exercise restraint in their policies, and, all in all, would be conducive to the strengthening of peace. At the same time, Argentina upholds the need for common and effective criteria for the monitoring of international transfers of weapons, and the need for control measures to be adopted and respected by the greatest possible number of States.

In this connection, it would be apposite to recall the task entrusted to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to prepare a comparative study on the defence expenditures of Argentina and its sister Republic of Chile. The objective of this undertaking is to study and propose a common standardized methodology for the calculation of the defence expenditures of both countries, in order to prepare the way for a proposed methodology applicable to the entire region. This work is of great importance in promoting transparency and mutual trust among countries and we hope that the final document will be ready by the end of March 2001.

The current situation calls for the resumption in the Conference on Disarmament of the debate on transparency, to prepare the ground for the drafting of future international instruments that will impose restraint and responsibility on both producers and end-users.

With regard to the issue of small weapons, the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons and, in particular, of small arms and light weapons has been a cause of concern over a

(Mr. Solari, Argentina)

number of years, in view of their serious negative impact on human safety and sustainable development. Argentina has a national computerized data system for firearms and in 1993 a new exercise was conducted to register all weapons that existed in the country. In 1994, it became obligatory for any bearer of arms to have a so-called "legitimate user's certificate" and a database was established. For Argentina, the problem of small weapons has three main aspects: the first is a purely humanitarian concern for the number of victims that these cause, and about the easy access to and use of such arms by adolescents and children. The second aspect is economic, relating to the resources that are squandered on the purchase of these weapons, instead of being used for development. The third dimension is that of security, because of the regional and global repercussions.

To curb this trend, we need better international control of the production, stockpiling and spread of these weapons. We therefore support the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in July 2001, with the aim of promoting a sense of responsibility among States for the export, import and transit of these weapons. We also hope that work will soon be concluded on the protocol on firearms to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which will create a centralized international register on the production and illicit traffic in firearms, munitions, explosives and other related materials.

With the various efforts under way in this area, our continent has taken the lead role in international action to combat the accumulation of small weapons, munitions and explosives, and it might therefore be worthwhile for the Conference to analyse the measures that have already been adopted regionally.

The problem of anti-personnel landmines is far from being resolved, but at least the international community has become aware of the issue and has taken certain substantive steps - notably, the Ottawa Convention - to further humanitarian demining and the prohibition of these weapons.

With the Ottawa Convention the international community has gained an instrument of great importance. The Argentine Republic deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention in 1999. Argentina decided to align itself with those countries that have been working so hard in pursuit of this objective and to join the collaborative effort for mine-clearing and assistance to victims, because these are fundamental and complementary aspects of the problem. To this end, Argentina has now set up a centre for training in humanitarian mine-clearing.

With regard now to procedures in the Conference and, in particular, certain aspects of its organization and functioning, the Argentine delegation would not oppose the establishment of any operational modalities which, without changing the context and the framework established by the rules of procedure of the Conference, would enable it to carry out its work and to create a propitious climate for future negotiations. In this connection, we note the importance attached by all members of the Conference to stepping up the President's informal consultations, so as to facilitate progress in our work.

(Mr. Solari, Argentina)

It should not be thought, however, that merely by spending time looking at the Conference's working procedures, we can pull the Conference out of its current deadlock. The decisive factor in all this is, of course, the political will of States. If this is lacking, or if it is weak, the Conference's paralysis will continue. No change in the rules can replace the collective will to hold dialogue, to negotiate and to bring about a solution.

For our own part, we are resolved to do everything within our reach to maintain what we have already achieved and we trust that the further strengthening of the non-proliferation regime will also help further nuclear disarmament. We are also determined to make the Conference on Disarmament an effective instrument designed to achieve actual results.

In short, Mr. President, it is essential that the Conference begin to discharge its mandate, namely, to bring about a safer and better world and, therefore, one that is less insecure; in this way essential resources will be released for the development and prosperity of peoples, resources which would otherwise have been squandered on these weapons of mass destruction. This is the aim and the aspiration of the Argentine delegation. We know that the mission is not easy, but for that it is no less essential.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Ambassador Solari, for your auspicious maiden address to the Conference and your kind words for the Chair, and I reiterate our welcome to you. I give the floor now to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Ian Soutar. You have the floor.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I, at the outset, say what a pleasure it is to see you presiding over the conduct of our affairs. Apart from the very strong links which exist between our two Governments and countries as members of the Commonwealth, I have good reason to appreciate the experience you personally bring to the presidency of our Conference. May I also take this opportunity of welcoming our new colleague, the Ambassador of Argentina, to our midst.

Mr. President, I have asked for the floor to set out the United Kingdom's expectations for the 2001 session of the Conference on Disarmament. My Government believes that it is important that we take advantage of this general debate to highlight the priorities on our agenda before we get down to substantive work. I hope that other delegations will do likewise so that in your continuing consultations on our work programme you may be guided by the views of the membership of the Conference.

Before addressing the prospects for 2001, I should like, briefly, to review developments during the year 2000. My Government believes that it is essential not to lose sight of the real progress which was made on the arms control and disarmament agenda during 2000.

In May, 158 States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, meeting at the Sixth Review Conference of that Treaty, adopted, by consensus, a final document. And yet, only a few weeks before the Conference began, a number of Cassandras were predicting the failure of the Conference and, with it, the demise of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. As I look around

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

this chamber, I recognize a number of delegates who made a significant contribution to the positive outcome of the Conference, as you did yourself, Mr. President. I should like to commend them, and their Governments, for not having despaired of the cause.

Throughout the year, here in Geneva, 52 States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972 continued to refine the text of a protocol to ensure compliance with the Convention. As a friend of the chair of the Ad Hoc Group, I can testify from personal experience to the intensification of work within the Group which occurred during the latter part of the year. By year end, the General Assembly had adopted, by consensus, a resolution calling for the convening of the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention in December 2001. The United Kingdom believes that the negotiations on the Protocol can, and should, be completed before that deadline.

The year 2000 also saw preparations get under way for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the first preparatory meeting taking place in March, and the confirmation, in a resolution by the General Assembly, that the Conference would take place in New York in July this year, and only the week before last, the second meeting of the preparatory committee saw further progress, with delegations intensifying their consultations on a programme of action, to be adopted by the Conference itself, aimed at resolving the problems caused by the worldwide accumulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Finally, no survey of the year 2000 could overlook the convening of the Millennium General Assembly in September last year, and its declaration, which highlighted the need to work for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, nor the subsequent adoption by the Security Council of a declaration which stressed the critical importance of disarmament.

It was against this background of solid achievement that the Secretary-General, in his message to the Conference at the outset of its 2001 session, drew attention to the continuing failure of the Conference on Disarmament to reach consensus, get down to substantive work and live up to its potential. The evident failure of the Conference to agree on a work programme, and the perception of stagnation which accompanied that failure, should not, however, obscure the fact that in the course of 2000 the Conference did make significant progress towards the adoption of a work programme. The formal output from the Conference's deliberations - our annual report to the General Assembly - does not tell the whole story. The report's slimness, a mere 38 paragraphs, weighing in at a scant 16 pages, should not be allowed to belie the efforts of succeeding presidencies to narrow the gaps among delegations regarding the content of that work programme, and the priorities to be attached to individual items within that programme.

Those efforts were to culminate in the proposals for a work programme, contained in CD/1620, which we have come to refer to as the Amorim proposals, not just as shorthand, but because of the very real respect in which we hold their author. Subsequent presidencies, first Bulgaria and now Canada, have continued efforts further to narrow the gaps between positions. As a result, I believe that the Conference on Disarmament is now poised to get down to substantive work, thereby re-asserting its traditional role.

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

Of the items on our agenda, it is no secret that the priority for my Government remains the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty will put a worldwide verifiable and legally-binding end to fissile material production for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. It is an essential step contributing to nuclear disarmament. Before there can be an effective verifiable ban on all nuclear weapons, there has to be confidence that no new fissile material for nuclear weapons can be produced. The international community reaffirmed the importance of this step several times last year - in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference, and in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Both these forums called on the Conference on Disarmament to make an immediate start to FMCT negotiations.

The United Kingdom does not believe that there can be progress on nuclear disarmament without progress on an FMCT. But we do recognize that, for some delegations, nuclear disarmament, seen as a whole, remains the highest priority. Let me make it clear, once again, that my delegation is ready to enter into substantive discussions on this topic. Members of the Conference will recall that the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference not only contained an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, but also called for further work on specific measures, including on verification. This is a topic which might be addressed by the ad hoc committee in the Amorim proposals. The United Kingdom delegation would certainly be willing to bring forward further ideas on this subject.

For other delegations, the question of the prevention of an arms race in space is a very high priority. My delegation does not believe that this topic is, in present circumstances, ripe for negotiation. But here too we are ready to enter into a discussion on this topic. I would urge those delegations for which this is a subject of concern - but which have so far been reluctant to agree to a work programme that does not specifically allow for negotiation - to reflect on the opportunity which they may be missing of having a wide-ranging discussion on this topic within the Conference.

Mr. President, I see no need at this stage to restate the United Kingdom position on other agenda items. These are well known, and I hope that, if the work programme is adopted, I may have an opportunity of setting out our position on individual items in greater detail. But what I do want to do today, Mr. President, is to assure you, and the Conference, that the United Kingdom is ready to accept a work programme based on the Amorim proposals. I hope very much, as I said at the outset of my remarks, that other delegations will be prepared to come forward with similar statements of intent, with the aim of allowing you to intensify and complete your present round of consultations.

Mr. President, the United Kingdom delegation is ready to roll up its sleeves and get down to work. I should like to call on other delegations to join us in doing so.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador for that encouraging statement and for your kind words to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Petko Draganov. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. DRAGANOV (Bulgaria): Mr. President, at the outset, please allow me to extend my warmest congratulations and to express personal gratification on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 2001 session. I would like to use this opportunity to commend the energy, creativity and imagination that you have been showing in the still ongoing consultations, some of which I was privileged and pleased to share with you. I would like to express my gratitude for the cooperation and goodwill I have enjoyed during this period. It is well known that the early stage of the Conference's annual session is particularly difficult, and this may be especially true this year. I am fully confident, however, that under your wise guidance and buoyant determination, the Conference on Disarmament has as good a chance as any to overcome its present deadlock and meet the responsibilities entrusted to it by the international community, as the sole forum for negotiating international arms control and disarmament treaties. At this important juncture, let me assure you, Mr. President, that in carrying out your term of service you can count on my delegation's continued cooperation and support.

Let me use this occasion to say a warm word of welcome to the new colleagues who have arrived to work with us in the Conference from Argentina, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Ukraine and wish them every success, as well as to bid farewell to the outgoing distinguished ambassadors of Bangladesh, Iraq, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka. My best wishes for good health and success go to them and their families. I would also like to extend my greetings to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky. A special word of welcome goes to our new Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, to whom we also pledge support and cooperation.

Mr. President, I am pleased to make my short intervention today under the presidency of the representative of a country which has proved in practice that the achievement of a mine-free world is among its highest priorities. Let me start by reiterating Bulgaria's firm support for all efforts, including in the framework of this forum, aimed at achieving a total elimination of anti-personnel landmines. Let me express our satisfaction with the fact that, by the end of the year 2000, 107 countries had ratified the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction and 57 countries had notified their consent to be bound by the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We are ready to support all proposals aimed at the universalization of these international instruments.

As I have already been able to inform the Conference on previous occasions, in accordance with its consistent policy of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, in 1998 the Republic of Bulgaria ratified the Ottawa Convention, as well as the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

(Mr. Draganov, Bulgaria)

Since signing the Ottawa Convention, Bulgaria has acted with vigour to meet its commitments. Thus, in 1999 the Bulgarian Government adopted a national programme for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention. It comprises all aspects of the clearing of minefields and the destruction of stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. The necessary national machinery, namely an interagency working group under the chairmanship of a deputy minister of defence, was established to coordinate and control the implementation of the programme.

By 31 October 1999 all 68 minefields on the territory of Bulgaria had been cleared and 13,926 antipersonnel mines of the type PSM-1 had been destroyed on the spot. A total of 13,364 acres were made mine-free.

Today, it is my pleasure to announce that, by 20 December 2000, i.e. two years in advance of the deadline under article 4 of the Ottawa Convention, a total of 881,970 anti-personnel mines had been destroyed and the Republic of Bulgaria effectively became a 100 per cent mine-free country. In accordance with article 3 of the Convention, 4,000 anti-personnel mines have been retained for the purpose of training in mine detection, mine clearance and mine destruction techniques.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Ambassador Draganov, for that positive statement and for your very kind words.

Distinguished delegates, as you are aware, our esteemed colleague and friend, Ambassador Man-Soon Chang of the Republic of Korea, will be leaving the Conference shortly. I know that my own admiration for the grace, the authority and the tact with which he represented his country and contributed to our common endeavour during his assignment here is widely shared. I am sure I speak for all of us when I offer Ambassador Chang and his family our very best wishes for continued success and for personal happiness. Ambassador Chang, you have the floor.

Mr. CHANG (Republic of Korea): I thank you very much for your kind words to me.

Mr. President, since this is the first and probably the last, time I take the floor under your presidency, may I warmly congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and assure you of my delegation's full support in your untiring endeavour.

All of us present here are keenly aware that kicking the Conference off to a good start during the first presidency of the year 2001, particularly at this critical juncture, is a most daunting and challenging task. It is no coincidence that this heavy responsibility has been conferred upon Canada and, in particular, a seasoned diplomat of your calibre, who has always demonstrated invaluable leadership and creativeness in many important areas of arms control and disarmament.

(Mr. Chang, Republic of Korea)

I have asked for the floor today to bid farewell to my colleagues here in this prestigious chamber, rather than to make a national statement on specific disarmament issues. I cannot, however, pass up this farewell occasion without sharing with you some of my thoughts on the current situation in the Conference on Disarmament.

My country became a member State of this august body in 1996 when CTBT negotiations were virtually completed. As a new member State, we had high hopes and great expectations for the proliferation of activities in the Conference, the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, to advance the global cause of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. Notwithstanding some work during a brief spell in early 1998, which coincided with my arrival in Geneva, developments at the Conference on Disarmament have fallen far short of our expectations, to say the least. What I have witnessed is not the proliferation, but the non-proliferation, of activities. This negotiating forum has been in the doldrums, helpless in the face of the forces of realpolitik. We have had many wake-up calls, yet the Conference has remained dormant. I was also dormant in this respect, without feeling many qualms, as I was able to devote more time and energy to other responsibilities.

If the Conference's inertia implies a world so safe and peaceful as not to be a cause for concern, then we could be excused for this sorry state of affairs. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case. Rather, there is a long list of agenda items which should be taken up without further delay, particularly in the wake of last year's successful NPT Review Conference. Outside the Conference on Disarmament, we now hear the increasing concern that this body could be marginalized or fall into oblivion, unless we regain momentum as soon as possible. I do not intend to be a doomsayer or to indulge in any irresponsible cynicism. Quite to the contrary, I stress the value and efficacy of the multilateral track in disarmament, however arduous and painstaking a process it may be.

In this regard, Mr. President, I take this opportunity to admire all the efforts made not only by yourself, but also by your predecessors, to break the impasse involving the work programme of the Conference on Disarmament and to move the process forward, which culminated in CD/1624. At this juncture, I fully share the judgement you made in your opening statement at the plenary of 23 January that CD/1624 - or something very close to it - remains the best option available.

As we all know what we lack now is not the wisdom to improve on the language of the work programme, but the political will to move forward even in the face of the evolving security environment, which we admit is complex and fluid. In difficult times, we are tempted to take up entrenched positions. Once we do that, however, we head straight for a vicious circle, without knowing how to break out of it. The Conference on Disarmament is now at a crossroads, and the direction that we should take is clear. It is the path of the win-win situation, where pragmatism and realism prevail over dogmatism and extremism, and where flexibility is not regarded as defeat or loss of face. Coming from a region where the cold war legacy has only just begun to wane, we have a keen interest in progress in the Conference on Disarmament, which certainly has significant implications for our part of the world.

(Mr. Chang, Republic of Korea)

Mr. President, the time has now come for me to move on, and so I bid farewell to all my colleagues remaining behind to struggle for substantive work to begin in the Conference. With your determination and strength, I believe you will persist in your patient efforts to bring all the players on board so that you can ride the wind and cross the raging sea, as you so eloquently pleaded. Last but not least, I would like to thank our Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the new Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Enrique Roman-Morey, and the secretariat, who have served the Conference so well with limited resources.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your statement and for your generous references to my work. We truly wish you and yours all the very best. The next speaker on my list, and the last speaker before I record a report on my consultations, is Ambassador Béliz of Panama.

Mr. BELIZ (Panama) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, may I first, on behalf of President Moscoso and his Government, thank you and the other members of the Conference on Disarmament for the invitation extended to us to participate as observers in this important body.

My country attaches great importance to the Conference on Disarmament, to its work and to the issues which it tackles. The work that you are carrying out to foster global disarmament as a path to peace among all nations is of great interest for us. Being one of the few countries in the world that has no army, as stipulated in article 305 of the Political Constitution, Panama firmly believes in disarmament.

Panama is a pre-eminently peaceful country because of the nature of its people and its geographical role as a trade route for the entire world. It is a signatory to almost all the conventions under the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations which promote peace, the comprehensive economic development of humankind, the renunciation of all types of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction and disarmament in general.

Thus, Panama is pleased to have signed the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We believe that any weapon of mass destruction is a flagrant violation of the right to the peaceful coexistence of all peoples and a threat to regional and world peace. Accordingly, Panama believes that collective efforts should be made to address these challenges and to achieve cooperation in a climate of peace and democracy in the world.

Finally, Sir, we wish you and all members of the Conference a year of fruitful work and great success.

Mr. SEETHARAM (India): I have requested the floor, Mr. President, to express the profound and sincere appreciation of my delegation for the words of sympathy and condolence expressed by you on behalf of this Conference regarding the disastrous earthquake in India. The Government and the people of India are making all efforts to deal with what is perhaps the

(Mr. Seetharam, India)

greatest natural calamity in the history of our country and one that has left so much death and destruction in its wake. I would also like to express our thanks for the spontaneous, generous and timely assistance on the part of the international community that has helped India in dealing with this extremely tragic event.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you for that statement. I want now, unless there are other speakers, to record a report on my own consultations to date, and I address three questions: first, how might the search for a consensus work programme be advanced? The second, to what worthwhile use might the Conference be put while that search continues? And third, what, then, lies ahead?

On tough, shifting terrain, with key fundamentals of future global security at stake, above all, the course of future nuclear attitudes, postures and arsenals, we are here seeking text for a Conference on Disarmament work programme with every word of which every one of the 66 diverse States here is prepared to live - every word, every State. Consensus in this Conference is powerful and valuable, our goal highly ambitious.

CD/1624, the Amorim programme, is good but it is not good enough. We are close, but in a quest for consensus, a miss is as good as a mile - and, let us face facts, we are still missing.

As President, as mandated and in the tradition of my predecessors, I am naturally compelled to explore change in the work programme or the accompanying presidential statement which might find consensus support. To this end, I have informally assessed the textual gaps to be closed and I have taken quite thorough pains to clarify a broad range of national positions and gain insight and counsel from colleagues, exploring the potential for further progress, for at least some further productive refinement of CD/1624 as a continuing basis for further work, if not quite yet full consensus.

Meanwhile, though, a few hard facts intrude. First, success depends critically on the will of the parties. In this exercise, like my predecessors, I can change more words than wills. We have brought water to the horses and horses to the water. The drinking is up to them.

Second, for key players, currently engaged in germane policy reviews, and for others, naturally concurrently engaged, multilateral arms control and disarmament talks and negotiations, including the work programme of our Conference, must be assessed in broader security equations. Our work always derives from that overarching concept and context of security analysis and action. Despite our best efforts, causation in this relationship is not much at all the other way around.

I will keep you posted.

On the second question of the worthwhile work that the Conference might do while that search continues, it should come as no surprise, after all we have been through, that without an agreed programme of work, the Conference can do little real work.

(The President)

It is generally agreed, for example, that thrashing about - meeting and talking for the sake of meeting and talking, say - would gain this house little credit. It could indeed be counterproductive, particularly if it served to emphasize and deepen differences, as would, almost certainly, rehearsals of well-known national postures on CD/1624.

In one important dimension, of course, despite the absence of an agreed work programme, the Conference can be fully used. Its platform can be used by parties to inform and to influence. This forum provides means of engagement which, well used, have some power to shape perceptions and policy analyses.

So far this year, though, many States are hesitating, reticent. For one thing, they are little inclined simply to rehearse what they have said before about our enduring impasse (not least lest they harm prospects for its resolution). But more, I sense, delegations do not want to resort to make-work here. They do not want to pretend here. There is too much at stake for make-believe.

Beyond valuable formal plenaries like today's, though, our prospects for useful work thin fast. Last week's developments were highly instructive about the real potential of many suggestions made over the years that we might seek substantive progress in informal discussions. The proposal that this week's first plenary be replaced by an informal meeting was immediately resisted by parties variously unwilling to launch discussions without concurrent negotiations or unwilling to agree to informal consultations without an agenda - and the quest for an agenda, of course, would bring the circle right back to where we are and have been for years, seeking consensus on content and balance in our work. In sum, I see few if any useful informal consultations on our immediate horizon.

What, then, lies ahead? There will come a time, make no mistake, when we will either approve a programme based on CD/1624 and get on with the ton of work in it - or, with natural reluctance, given all the time and effort we have invested in the attempt, abandon that draft and start the search again for consensus on the content, allocation and schedule of our work, whether discussion, exploration or negotiation.

Impatient angst notwithstanding, that decision is not yet ripe, that time not yet come. It is true that delegations are not all yet ready to accept CD/1624 - but nor are they at all yet ready to abandon it as, at least, "a basis for further intensive consultations".

In these impacted circumstances, I will carry the search for consensus forward, despite the awkward timing, on the simple grounds that CD/1624 is not yet good enough. Our fundamental Conference responsibility, to create and sustain a credible multilateral option for States seeking security here, has not yet therefore been fulfilled. Whenever States find themselves ready to dispose of CD/1624 in one way or another, we need to ensure that it really is our best shot and as national statements have made plain and my consultations have confirmed, that shot still needs work. I will do it, as much as I can.

(The President)

At this stage, I am considering CD/1624 as the basis for a Conference session devoted to a timely, valuable exploration of multilateral alternatives to further resort to arms.

As the search for work-programme consensus continues, we will have formal plenaries as required - without fretting and fussing about our fate too much or too noisily. But that said, I reiterate my hope that national statements might worthily fill our early plenaries, as they have today's.

As well, we should go on trying hard to conceive work, worthwhile work that we might get done, despite our inability - which we know may well persist for some time - to bring the long discussion of CD/1624 to a conclusion.

Meanwhile, of course, all delegations are at all times free and welcome to bring their best ideas for solutions forward. That use, to serve its members as a platform and forum, this Conference will always have.

The timing, I repeat, is awkward for me, for my successors, for all of us. Indeed, for all parties making suggestions about the way forward, I have noticed, timing is a vexed question. For example, the German suggestion that we accepted last week makes obvious good sense that, without work-programme agreement, we should get back to basics, back to agenda consultations. Where else would there be to start anew, after all, but with the agenda?

But when would we take that step? In Germany's view, this should not be for the time being, so as to allow my consultations to continue, but perhaps after my presidency. The problem is, though, that parties will then still be waiting and seeing. Indeed, circumstances may well not be ripe for final decision on a fully-fledged long-term work programme for several entire presidencies to come.

As to other suggestions for worthwhile work, both timing and content are inherently problematic. Any proposal for substantive work - whether for informal consultations, for expert study groups or for the appointment of special coordinators to elaborate mandates, as examples - must contend with our lack of an effective agenda. In each case, consensus would be precluded by precisely the same differences between parties about priorities, emphases and balance that continue to impede agreement on a programme of work. There is no getting around this problem. It has to be solved.

I seek your sustained understanding and support as I work on to try to clear a path through these various densities to refreshed purpose and to good work as soon as possible for this valuable institution.

I should now like to invite you to take a decision on the request of Uruguay to participate as an observer in the work of the Conference during this session, without having first considered it in an informal plenary session. This request is contained in document CD/WP.516, which is before you.

'(The President)

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Uruguay to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure? I see no objections.

It is so decided.

Unless there are other delegations who wish to take the floor now, this concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 8 February 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.865
8 February 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 February 2001, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Christopher Westdal (Canada)

GE.01-60420 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 865th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Conference, to extend a very cordial welcome to the new colleagues who have assumed their responsibilities as representatives of their Governments in the Conference, namely, Ambassador Amina Mohamed of Kenya and Ambassador Sverre Bergh Johansen of Norway, and to assure them of our cooperation and support in their new assignments.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Kenya and Switzerland.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I want, however to confirm that, as was announced at the presidential consultations yesterday afternoon and as I hope has been communicated to you all, I intend to convene immediately after this plenary meeting an informal open-ended consultation on the programme of work of the Conference.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya. Ambassador Mohamed, you have the floor.

Ms. MOHAMED (Kenya): Mr. President, I am addressing the Conference for the first time. Accordingly, before I move to the subject of my statement, I would like to say how grateful my delegation is to you for your efforts in steering the Conference on Disarmament in the search for a consensus work programme and I should like to assure you of our support and best wishes.

Mr. President, I have taken the floor to inform distinguished colleagues and delegations that, on 23 January 2001, Kenya deposited, with the United Nations Secretary-General in New York, its instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Kenya has therefore become a State party to the Convention.

We have taken this step out of our concern over weaponry which continues to have a devastating effect on many countries, especially in the developing world. It is particularly worrisome that, much as these weapons are deployed in conflicts by combatants, their main victims continue to be innocent civilians, including children.

We therefore consider the Convention to be an appropriate instrument for tackling, in a comprehensive manner, the widespread use of anti-personnel mines. At the United Nations, Kenya has traditionally co-sponsored the resolution on the implementation of the Convention. It is our hope that the Convention will attain universal adherence, as urged by the resolution, and that the human suffering resulting from the use of mines will thus be reduced to a minimum, if not brought to an end.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Mohamed, and welcome again to the Conference. I thank you for your kind words, and I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Faessler.

Mr. FAESSLER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation has the privilege of speaking under your presidency, may I take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to you and assure you of the Swiss delegation's full support to you in your performance of your functions.

It is my honour to address the Conference today on behalf of the French and Swiss delegations on the subject of a seminar on traceability, marking and registering of small arms and light weapons. The seminar, organized jointly by the French and Swiss Governments, will be held on 12 and 13 March this year at the Geneva International Conference Centre. The main aim of the seminar is to hold an informal exchange on the subject of traceability, marking and registering of small arms and light weapons, with an eye to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which will be held in New York in July 2001. On the first day of the seminar, specialists in this area will introduce certain technical issues. These presentations will be followed by an informal discussion, involving representatives from industry and from non-governmental organizations. The second day will be given over to an in-depth discussion between governmental experts on the political, legal and technical implications of an international regime for the traceability, marking and registering of small arms and light weapons.

I would like to draw the attention of representatives here to the fact that the invitation to this Seminar, issued jointly by the French and Swiss Governments, has recently been transmitted to the States taking part in the Conference on Disarmament and to permanent missions in Geneva and New York. A copy of the invitation has been placed this morning in the individual pigeon-holes of delegations attending the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes my list of speakers for today, unless there are other delegations that wish to take the floor.

If not, I should like to invite you now to take a decision on the request of Côte d'Ivoire to participate as observer in the work of the Conference during this session, without having first considered it in an informal plenary. This request is contained in document CD/WP.517, which is before you. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Côte d'Ivoire to participate in our work, in accordance with our rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our business for today. As I announced earlier, I will convene in 10 minutes time in this conference room an open-ended informal consultation on the programme of work

The next meeting of the plenary will be held a week from today, on Thursday, 15 February, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.866
15 February 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 February 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Christopher Westdal (Canada)

GE.01-60551 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 866th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Myanmar, New Zealand, Malaysia, Sweden, who will make a statement on behalf of the European Union, China and the United States of America, after which I plan to offer some concluding remarks of my own.

I give the floor now to the representative of Myanmar, Ambassador Mya Than.

Mr. MYA THAN (Myanmar): Mr. President, I should like to express my delegation's profound gratification with the effective manner in which you have conducted the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament during this first difficult month of its 2001 session. I applaud you for your great efforts.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Petko Draganov, for his tireless efforts and invaluable contribution to the Conference's work during his long tenure as President, to the end of December 2000.

I also wish to extend a very warm welcome to our colleagues who have recently joined us in the Conference on Disarmament: His Excellency Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia, His Excellency Mr. Rakesh Sood of India, His Excellency Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Horacio Solari of Argentina, His Excellency Mr. Sverre Bergh Johansen of Norway and Her Excellency Ms. Amina Chawahir Mohamed of Kenya. Most of them are our old friends. We look forward to deepening our friendship and to close cooperation with them all.

Mr. President, the focus of consultations and discussions among the member delegations in the Conference on Disarmament is now on how to revitalize the Conference and on the kind of useful work that we shall do in the Conference, in the absence of a consensus programme of work. I recall that, at the informal plenary meeting on 8 February 2001, you said that now we might turn our attention to "plan B", while continuing our efforts to achieve "plan A". I shall, therefore, devote this statement to my proposal for "plan B" and shall reserve my delegation's general policy statement for a more opportune time later on.

Mr. President, the Conference on Disarmament is a unique institution. It is the single multilateral negotiating forum dealing with arms control and disarmament. It has a track record of many multilateral agreements on arms control and disarmament. As a matter of fact, all the existing multilateral agreements on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are products of the Conference on Disarmament. This forum is capable of producing substantive arms control and disarmament agreements when the member States have the political will and have mandated it to do so. The present impasse is due to a lack of political will on the part of some member States but is not due to any inherent inefficiency of the Conference. Having said this, I do believe that there is still room for improvement in the Conference's methods of work.

(Mr. Mya Than, Myanmar)

There are many aspects to the question of how to improve these methods of work. In this statement, I shall focus on only one aspect: how to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament and start a process of dialogue that will facilitate our endeavours to reach a consensus programme of work and to carry out our real substantive work.

Mr. President, your analysis of the present state of consultations at the plenary meeting on 1 February 2001 and at the informal plenary meeting on 8 February 2001 indicated that things were not moving at all in these consultations. You, Mr. President, have tried your best to reach a consensus text on a programme of work by conducting continuous and intensive consultations. I admire your great energy, tireless efforts and ingenious diplomatic initiatives. Your consultations and activities in this connection are not confined to Geneva. You have travelled to Beijing, Moscow, London, Paris and Washington to enter into serious consultations with high-ranking authorities in those capitals. Notwithstanding all these endeavours, your consultations have so far yielded no positive results. This is through no fault of yours. Nor is it because of a lack of perseverance or a lack of ingenuity on your part. It is simply because of the current political situation and the underlying political issues. Notwithstanding the lack of any tangible results, we commend you on your tireless efforts.

This, then, is the situation. Now the question is: what shall we do in the Conference on Disarmament pending an agreement on a programme of work? If I am not mistaken, the issue of the programme of work is likely to remain pending for some time. I believe that we should not let the Conference lie idle until we reach agreement on a programme of work.

While a consensus programme of work is our objective, and our delegation wants to have it as soon as, and as much as, any other delegation, I should like to propose that, pending an agreement on a programme of work, the President should convene plenary meetings devoted to substantive items on the agreed agenda. The outline of my proposal is as follows:

(a) The President should continue to conduct his ongoing consultations on a programme of work;

(b) Member delegations should be encouraged to make the optimum use of regular plenary meetings to address substantive issues and make their contributions;

(c) At the same time, the President should convene, in addition to the regular plenary meetings, plenary meetings devoted to substantive items on the agreed agenda which the Conference adopted on the opening day of its 2001 session. Since we have already agreed on this year's agenda, discussion of substantive items one by one should not pose any problems. Each of these plenary meetings may be devoted to a substantive item: namely, cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters; etc.;

(Mr. Mya Than, Myanmar)

(d) The President should structure, to the extent possible, discussions on particular substantive agenda items or subjects. He should, at the same time, allow and encourage member delegations to make general comments and raise any issue related to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the agenda items or subjects under discussion;

(e) In this context, member delegations and groups of member States should also be encouraged to submit papers - working papers and non-papers - and to put forward specific proposals;

(f) Salient points of the discussions at these plenary meetings should be compiled and incorporated in the Conference's report.

Furthermore, the President should also be encouraged to conduct informal consultations and discussions with member delegations and appropriately structured groups of member States on how to overcome the present impasse and move forward in the Conference on Disarmament.

In essence, the plenary meetings I have referred to in my proposal would be something like the informal plenary meeting that you convened on Thursday, 8 February 2001.

The main thrust of my proposal is to make optimum use of the mechanism of plenary meetings devoted to substantive issues and any issues that member delegations may wish to raise relating to the work of the Conference.

This is the outline of my proposal. It may be modified as necessary and appropriate so as to reach consensus among all member delegations. My delegation is very flexible.

May I stress here that the purpose of this proposal is not to replace the current efforts to reach agreement on a programme of work but to facilitate and serve as a preparatory process leading to and supportive of reaching consensus on a programme of work which, in turn, will enable us to start our substantive work.

Mr. President, I put forward this proposal with the best of intentions in order to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament and to facilitate our efforts to secure a consensus programme of work and commence our real substantive work.

I am merely placing this proposal on the table. I am not seeking a decision on it immediately. I shall leave it to the incoming president and subsequent presidents to take it up for a decision when the time is opportune.

I hope that this proposal to make optimum use of the mechanism of such plenary meetings will receive the serious and favourable consideration of the member States of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Mya Than, Myanmar)

It is true that this arrangement is not entirely satisfactory. It will, however, be a workable and useful exercise. The question here is: pending and short of an agreement on a programme of work, what kind of goal-oriented and useful process can we have in the Conference? My proposal offers one possible way of achieving such a process.

We believe that such plenary meetings will provide us with an opportunity to understand each other's positions better, to identify and clarify the issues, and to explore ways and means of moving forward. Furthermore, they can also generate momentum and facilitate our search for a consensus text on our programme of work.

Let me further illustrate how this proposal could facilitate our efforts to secure a consensus programme of work by taking the analogy of a patient in a coma. Let us suppose that a patient has a high fever caused by malaria. The patient goes into a coma. The physician, anxious to save the patient's life, tries, as a first step, to resuscitate the patient and make him regain consciousness. Once the patient has recovered from the coma, the next step taken by the physician is to cure the patient of malaria and to restore him to normal good health.

The first step, of resuscitating of the patient, is analogous to making optimum use of the mechanism of plenary meetings devoted to substantive issues on the agenda. The second step, of curing the patient of the disease, is analogous to reaching agreement on a programme of work. The first step, in our analogy, by no means hampers but rather helps the second step - that of curing the patient. In the same way, the first step of convening plenary meetings, as outlined in my proposal, will only facilitate the second step, of reaching agreement on a programme of work.

Mr. President, I hope that my proposal, outlined above, will be a useful input and that it will help us to start the work of the Conference on Disarmament on "plan B", leading to "plan A".

The PRESIDENT: Ambassador Mya Than, I thank you for that creative and resuscitating statement and for your very kind words about my work. I now invite the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Clive Pearson, to follow suit.

Mr. PEARSON (New Zealand): Mr. President, at the outset may I congratulate you, albeit so late in your term, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Be assured of our continuing cooperation and support. I also extend a warm welcome to Mr. Enrique Román-Morey.

Mr. President, I have the honour of taking the floor today on behalf of the delegations of New Zealand and South Africa. I do so in the context of the memorandum of cooperation on disarmament issues between our two countries.

Last year, when nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts seemed to be faltering, the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed on a package of new undertakings. Many of these broke new ground. Some of the measures

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

proposed were multilateral, others were bilateral or plurilateral. The intention was unambiguous: to promote a set of undertakings whereby the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation could be constructively reinvigorated and redirected.

Two of the agreed NPT undertakings have particular significance for the Conference's programme of work and can be used to build on the progress we jointly made during 2000.

These undertakings call for: first, the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament where the Conference is urged to agree on a programme of work which includes the immediate establishment of such a body; and, second, the necessity for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, where the Conference is urged to agree on a programme of work which includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty with the view to their conclusion within five years.

Mr. President, South Africa and New Zealand attach very great importance to the full implementation of the commitments entered into at the NPT Review Conference. In addition, we have fully supported your efforts to get down to work in this Conference. The Conference concluded its work last year with the understanding that CD/1624, or the "Amorim text", was a basis for further intensive consultations. We have also welcomed your efforts further to develop the Amorim language. We are extremely disappointed that this is continuing to prove elusive.

The proposals in CD/1624 are far from perfect, especially the mandate on nuclear disarmament. The NPT delivered a mandate which is very clear in its call for the Conference on Disarmament to "deal" with nuclear disarmament. The language before us is significantly weaker, nevertheless we have been prepared to work with it. As you may recall, I made an informal suggestion to strengthen the nuclear disarmament mandate last week. We appreciate, however, that at this stage we must all remain focused on what can realistically and practically be achieved.

We would be hesitant about and would have to consider carefully our positions on proposals that divert attention to "make-work" solutions for the Conference on Disarmament, if they were to reduce the relevance of this negotiating body to that of a debating society. Moreover, proposals for thematic discussions, however well intended, run a risk of providing convenient cover for those who do not want to engage in real negotiations. Positions could become more - and not less - entrenched. But the time may fast be coming when we have to take a hard look at how this Conference is delivering on its mandate.

This is a defining moment for the Conference on Disarmament. Mr. President, you are absolutely right in your observation that the Conference's negotiating mandate is as unique as it is necessary for all of us committed to further progress on disarmament.

At a time when there are disturbing signs of a preference for unilateral solutions or options, it is essential for the continuation of multilateralism that this body re-engages in real work. We fully support unilateral arms reductions, but not unilateral action which might have a negative impact on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

While each of us has the right to determine our own security and defence needs, history and common sense demonstrate that unilateralism will not guarantee international security. This is a collective responsibility. We need to be careful not to misappropriate strategic considerations to conceal procrastination on disarmament.

Let us be clear also at this crucial moment in the Conference on Disarmament that disarmament is a security-building process and not an optional extra. Those disarmament pledges made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference are far-reaching. Disinclination will undermine and discredit the non-proliferation regime. Seven months have passed and the opportunity to build on the NPT success has not been grasped.

Mr. President, you have pointed out to us that this is "a brand new day". It is time for the nuclear-weapon States to settle their differences and jointly to start implementing their commitments with purpose and determination. We are ready to make compromises to achieve a programme of work, and we are looking to others in this chamber to do the same, and to do it now.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Pearson for that statement and for your kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Mr. Raja Reza.

Mr. REZA (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and your untiring efforts and endeavours in reaching consensus on the programme of work.

Landmines are still a real and constant threat to millions of people. They continue to take innocent lives at an alarming rate.

Malaysia is committed to the attainment of a truly universal ban on anti-personnel landmines and is proud to be one of the pioneers in the region to join the growing family of the Ottawa Convention. Only 23 months have passed since its entry into force and already 139 States have signed the Convention. Malaysia firmly believes that the Ottawa Convention has irreversibly established itself as the international norm in banning anti-personnel landmines.

Malaysia signed the Convention on 3 December 1997 and deposited its instrument of ratification on 22 April 1999.

On 23 January 2001, Malaysia completed its stockpile destruction of anti-personnel landmines and accordingly fulfilled its obligations under article 4 of the Convention. The destruction of 94,263 anti-personnel landmines began on 15 January 2001 and took place at three different locations in Malaysia, using one of the safest and most effective methods. This historic event was conducted in the presence of representatives from several international non-governmental organizations and also the media, specially invited to witness the event.

(Mr. Reza, Malaysia)

Malaysia became the twenty-seventh State party to have destroyed its stockpile of anti-personnel landmines. Just two weeks ago, Bulgaria, the twenty-sixth State party to have completed its stockpile destruction, informed the Conference of its action in this regard. More significantly, Malaysia is now the first mine-free country in Asia.

Malaysia's decision not to retain any anti-personnel landmines for training and development purposes, which is permissible under article 3 of the Convention, is another commitment that we are proud to make.

Mr. President, Malaysia is a strong supporter of the Ottawa Convention. At the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo, Mozambique, in 1999, Malaysia was elected as co-rapporteur of the Standing Committee of Experts on Stockpile Destruction. Currently, Malaysia and Slovakia are co-chairs of the said Standing Committee. At the same time, Malaysia is also on the Coordinating Committee of the Ottawa Convention, established immediately after the Second Meeting of States Parties in Geneva. Malaysia also co-sponsored resolution 55/33 V on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, tabled at the United Nations General Assembly last year.

Malaysia is firm in its conviction that the humanitarian suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines far outweighs their military utility. In this context, we would like to see the political push for universal acceptance of this Convention sustained and intensified. Malaysia also strongly believes that it is pertinent for the issue of landmines to be placed high on the agenda of regional forums to complement efforts to universalize the Convention.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Reza, for that statement and for your kind words. I give the floor now to Ambassador Henrik Salander, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. SALANDER (Sweden): Mr. President, I have the honour to take the floor today on behalf of the 15 member States of the European Union. Furthermore, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia - and Cyprus and Malta, also associated with the Union - align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to see you in the important office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I have always appreciated your energy and your creativity, and I believe they have well served the Conference in the difficult times it is now confronting. I also want to extend the greetings of the European Union to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, even in his temporary absence, and a warm welcome to our new Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Román-Morey.

Mr. President, the European Union has asked for the floor to set out the views of its member States on the work of the Conference on Disarmament in 2001 and the expectations and hopes that we collectively have for this year.

(Mr. Salander, Sweden)

The year 2000 proved to be another year of standstill and stalemate for the Conference, which was unable effectively to launch its work. Thus far, the beginning of 2001 has not been promising either. While paying tribute both to you, Mr. President, and to the presidents of the Conference immediately preceding you - Ambassador Lint of Belgium, Ambassador Amorim of Brazil and Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria, who spared no efforts in attempting to find a compromise solution - and while thanking them wholeheartedly, the European Union can only deeply regret this situation.

That said, the year 2000 was not a uniformly dismal year for multilateral efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation. The European Union wishes to stress that the NPT Review Conference was an important success, and we have on many occasions welcomed the adoption of its Final Document. The European Union will fulfil its responsibility in this regard by contributing to the full implementation of the Final Document.

In the context of the Conference on Disarmament, this refers especially to two important practical steps which were unanimously agreed by the States parties to the NPT, namely, the negotiations on a fissile material treaty and the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral forum at the disposal of the international community for disarmament negotiations. The persisting stalemate within this body thus does nothing to strengthen the international regime for disarmament and non-proliferation.

This situation also prevents us from doing today what we actually decided to do, and started to do, in 1998 - the immediate and effective launch of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. The full implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the negotiation of an FMCT constitute the next essential steps in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The need for an immediate start to such negotiations was clearly reaffirmed in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference, and also in resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly later in the year. In spite of the delays, the European Union continues to attach the utmost importance to starting the negotiation of such a treaty during this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament and to its conclusion at the latest within five years.

Mr. President, the European Union still hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to overcome the obstacles to the effective launch of its work very soon and thus respond to the legitimate expectations of the international community.

(Mr. Salander, Sweden)

If this endeavour is to succeed, the security concerns of all States must be taken into account. Three undertakings - the immediate launch of FMCT negotiations, as well as dealing with both nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space within subsidiary bodies whose mandates need to be both pragmatic and substantial in order to be accepted by all - taken together, constitute the basis today for an agreement upon which we can begin our work.

Mr. President, throughout the sessions of last year, the member Governments of the European Union provided continued and substantive support for the efforts of the successive presidents of the Conference. Their work, refined over the months and manifest in document CD/1624 - which has come to be known as the Amorim proposal - contains, in the view of the European Union, the elements for a rapid agreement, if all members of the Conference display a spirit of openness and pragmatism. We are also convinced that other delegations and groups of countries share this assessment of the situation, which would allow the President to arrive at a solution.

There is no need today to detail the views of the European Union on the other items of the Conference's agenda that are included in CD/1624. We support the start of work on those items, too, and we will come back to outline our positions in relation to them, as soon as the Conference reaches agreement and starts on substantive work.

Mr. President, I would also like to recall today that the European Union particularly supports the prospective Conference membership of those member States of the Union and associated countries which have applied for admission to the Conference. We therefore support the continuation of the enlargement process of the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me conclude by saying that we strongly urge the Conference to explore all avenues to start substantive work. We, the European Union, as well as the States that have aligned themselves with this statement, will not fail to support the President actively and energetically in endeavouring to restore the important and central position of the Conference on Disarmament in the web of international forums upon which we all depend.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you for that statement and your kind words, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Hu Xiaodi of China.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I take the floor during your presidency, allow me to begin by expressing the appreciation of the Chinese delegation for your unremitting efforts to facilitate the early start of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to extend our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Draganov, for the valuable endeavour he has made to bridge the differences and bring the Conference out of its deadlock. Furthermore, I would take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Petrovsky, to our new Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Román-Morey, and to the other staff members of the Conference secretariat, for the hard work and commendable service that they have rendered to our Conference.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Mr. President, with the midnight striking of the bell on New Year's Eve, humankind has entered the twenty-first century. While this past century has seen unprecedented progress in world civilization, it has also witnessed the untold sufferings of humankind in countless wars and conflicts. Reflecting on the past in the light of the present, humankind's most urgent and heartfelt aspiration must be to build and preserve lasting peace, common security and universal development in the twenty-first century. Facing a new century, we firmly believe that only through mutual understanding, accommodation, respect, coordination and cooperation can all the world's countries together maintain peace and security and achieve development and prosperity. The old security concept, which was based on military alliances, operated through the build-up of armaments and had as its aim the quest for one country's absolute security to the detriment of other countries' interests, should be discarded. The twenty-first century needs a new security concept which should be centred on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, cooperation and resolving disputes through dialogue.

The Chinese Government has all along pursued an independent peace-oriented foreign policy, in which it attaches importance to, and actively participates in, the ongoing efforts of the international community to promote just and rational arms control and disarmament. In the new century, China will stick to its set of principles, views and positions with regard to preserving strategic security and stability, promoting nuclear disarmament and preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. It will continue to honour its international commitments and stands ready to make greater efforts to safeguard the enduring peace and common security of all the world's countries.

Mr. President, given that nuclear weapons were invented by humankind in the twentieth century, humankind should also be able to eliminate them in the twenty-first century. The Final Document adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference will be of great importance and benefit in guiding and promoting the future nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament process.

We believe that progress in nuclear disarmament hinges on preserving the global strategic balance and stability and ensuring that the security of all countries remains intact. The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to take far-reaching and irreversible steps to reduce their respective nuclear arsenals.

As a nuclear-weapon State, China does not evade its responsibilities and obligations in respect of nuclear disarmament. Through its sensible policies on nuclear weapons and its sound position on nuclear disarmament, China has actually made an outstanding contribution to the cause of international nuclear disarmament. The Chinese Government has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons. In 1994, the Chinese Vice-Premier and then Foreign Minister Mr. Qian Qichen, proposed at the United Nations General Assembly that the international community should negotiate and conclude a treaty banning nuclear weapons. We hope that such a treaty may be concluded at an early date in the new century.

(Mr. Hu, China)

China actively participated in the negotiation of the CTBT, and was among the first group of countries to sign the treaty. The treaty has already been submitted to the National People's Congress for ratification. We continue insistently to urge that all nuclear-weapon States undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and that they unconditionally commit themselves never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. These undertakings should be codified into solemn, international legal instruments. At the same time, nuclear-weapon States should also bring their own nuclear weapons back to their own territories and renounce the policies and practices of "nuclear sharing" and the "nuclear umbrella".

The most urgent and imperative task facing us today is to preserve the ABM Treaty and check the trend of weaponization of outer space. This is also indispensable for the follow-up steps as specified in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference to proceed. With regard to the issue of how to deal with nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, the Chinese delegation supports the proposals put forward by the Group of 21, in documents CD/1570 and CD/1571. China also supports the early negotiation and conclusion of an FMCT in the interests of maintaining global strategic stability and promoting the process of nuclear disarmament.

The ABM Treaty is the cornerstone of preserving global strategic stability. Its significance goes far beyond the scope of United States-Russian bilateral relations and has a direct bearing on the security of all countries and it should therefore be strictly observed. Any attempt to undermine the integrity and effectiveness of the treaty on whatever pretext will have far-reaching negative consequences for international peace and security. For two consecutive years the United Nations General Assembly has, by overwhelming majority, adopted a resolution on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty, amply reflecting the will and determination of the international community to maintain the global strategic balance and stability and its clear opposition to the development and deployment of national missile defence systems.

Outer space is the common heritage of all humankind. It is the shared aspiration of all peoples to use outer space for peaceful purposes. That said, the missile defence systems currently under development pose the serious threat to outer space of its weaponization, which might trigger off a new arms race. We are seriously concerned by reports of a space war exercise which took place in late January this year. The exercise used outer space as a battlefield and took the year 2017 as its scenario. Anti-satellite weapons, strategic missile defence systems and land-based laser weapons were used in the exercise to attack targets in space, and space weapons to launch pre-emptive strikes. This has incontrovertibly demonstrated that the weaponization of outer space is imminent.

For this reason, the international community must now, as a matter of urgency, take effective measures to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. China urges all countries, and in particular those with great space capabilities, to abide strictly by all

(Mr. Hu, China)

international conventions and arms control and disarmament agreements, including those of a bilateral nature, which relate to outer space. It is imperative that all countries concerned desist from all activities that contravene the principles of the peaceful use of outer space, including missile defence plans.

It is particularly important that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should immediately re-establish its ad hoc committee on outer space, to negotiate and conclude a legal instrument or instruments preventing the weaponization of an arms race in outer space, as urged by the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions, with a view to remedying the deficiencies in the existing international legal regime.

We feel bound to point out that, in recent years, the very country conducting space war exercises and weaponizing outer space has single-handedly obstructed the negotiations on PAROS in the Conference on Disarmament, by denying the risk of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. We are deeply worried about this country's practice, which is certain to result in harm to the interests of other countries without bringing any benefit to itself.

Mr. President, since the end of the Cold War, the international community has made concerted efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction and their means of delivery. Experience has shown that the correct and effective way of tackling the problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction and their means of delivery is to promote a process of non-proliferation within a framework of collective security and to conduct consultation, dialogue and cooperation on an equal footing. On the other hand, it is totally unacceptable to create any unilateral or small group regimes outside the global systems or, in the name of non-proliferation, to impose unjustified economic or other types of sanctions against other countries. This can only undermine the objective of non-proliferation.

Non-proliferation is aimed at enhancing the equality and security of all countries. It must not be used as a tool for stronger or larger countries to control weaker or smaller ones. Nor should it become an instrument which a small group of countries can use to obstruct the building of national defence by the great majority of countries and to promote their own advantages, with a view to attaining overall domination. The practice of applying double standards should not be allowed in non-proliferation. On the one hand, a certain country vigorously promotes negotiations on non-proliferation to guard against other countries. It is far more concerned about the non-proliferation measures of other countries than about its own, for fear of any loopholes that other countries may have. At the same time, it acts entirely as it pleases regarding the existing arms control and non-proliferation agreements, making disguised reservations through its domestic legislation, rejecting ratification or even threatening to withdraw. Such actions will severely undermine the confidence of the international community in arms control and non-proliferation efforts. Needless to say, for a country to introduce weapons and military means into outer space or other new domains and to seek its own absolute security and superiority at the expense of all others will, without question, deal a crushing blow to international non-proliferation efforts.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Three months ago, it was claimed that responsibility for the failure by the Conference on Disarmament to agree on its work programme rested with China, because China had allegedly engaged in hostage-taking or setting up linkages. This is a distortion of the facts. Today, it is manifest to all that the root cause for the stalemate in the Conference over the last two years lies in the disruption of strategic stability and the introduction of weapons and an arms race in outer space. It is a matter of simple logic that every agenda item taken up by the Conference on Disarmament is closely related to security and that all aspects of security are inseparable. Accordingly, each agenda item is bound to be inherently linked to other items. The priorities of all parties should be equally valued. It is unacceptable that negotiations should be conducted for the benefit of one party while undermining the fundamental interests of others. We sincerely hope that, when giving consideration to its own concerns, the delegation in question will also take into consideration the concerns of other countries.

The Conference on Disarmament is not only a mirror reflecting international security situations, but also a means of promoting international arms control and disarmament. It should not negotiate for negotiation's sake and, what is more, it must never offer mere lip-service without proper negotiation. It is the Conference's duty to conduct genuine negotiations to eliminate or reduce the threat to peace and security and to conduct genuine negotiations to solve the serious problems facing the international community in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Undoubtedly, international arms control and disarmament efforts are currently at a crossroads. The most prominent threat is posed by the attempts to overthrow the ABM Treaty and to weaponize outer space. Under such circumstances, to formulate a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and to start negotiations on such issues as PAROS, nuclear disarmament, FMCT and negative security assurances is not only the obligation of the Conference on Disarmament, but also the only possible way of breaking the current stalemate and moving forward. The Chinese delegation supports the Amorim proposal as a basis for further intensified consultations, and is ready to make further efforts to reach a comprehensive and balanced programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Hu, for your statement and for your kind words. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Robert Grey.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Mr. President, two years ago today, I was seated where you are sitting now, serving this Conference as its rotational president. Let me assure you, however, that it is a far greater pleasure to sit here alongside other member States and congratulate you as you complete four weeks of energetic and intense endeavour as presiding officer of the Conference on Disarmament. I know exactly how you feel.

In that same spirit, the efforts of my entire delegation are available to assist you and your immediate successor, Ambassador Vega of Chile, as you and he seek to promote agreement on the basis of the work programme proposal advanced on 24 August 2000 by Ambassador Amorim of Brazil.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

Ambassador Amorim's proposal remains a sound basis for reaching consensus in the Conference. It did not descend from heaven and was not engraved on stone, but I believe your soundings among a wide range of member States have convinced you - they certainly have convinced me - that there is little room for tinkering with it. After all, Ambassador Amorim's proposal took full advantage of significant advances that he inherited from his own distinguished predecessors, including Ambassador Dembri of Algeria and Ambassador Lint of Belgium. Further, Ambassador Amorim's proposal genuinely reflects the broad convictions of our colleagues and our strong belief that the Conference should get down to substantive work that will enhance international peace and security.

A few weeks after Ambassador Amorim tabled his proposal, our former Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, delivered farewell remarks to the Conference, on 21 September 2000. In doing so, he drew on over 20 years of experience, during which he acquired considerable insight into the whys and wherefores of multilateral diplomacy. I would like to commend and call attention to the following key paragraph:

> "Preparing the ground for future negotiations through discussions and technical work is a prerequisite for the start of genuine negotiations. All major negotiations have been preceded by a pre-negotiation stage, in which some shared understanding is reached that a security problem exists and that it must be addressed multilaterally. This process may be arduous and time-consuming, but it provides the guarantee that the end-product, that is to say, treaty-making, is based on solid foundations which take into account the security concerns of all and therefore ensures the universality and effectiveness of the agreements reached. What is required is a common willingness of all the membership of the Conference, making full use of its inbuilt flexibility and recognized expertise, to develop a workable and balanced programme of work which takes into account the priorities and concerns of all."

In effect, Mr. Bensmail was describing the proposal that Ambassador Amorim put forward at the end of the preceding month. By implication he was also commenting on efforts and plans of the Conference for handling the three topics that have been at the centre of ongoing controversy: negotiations to conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty, and deliberations of the Conference on issues related to nuclear disarmament and outer space.

Above all, the Conference needs to start negotiations on an FMCT. In this case, "the pre-negotiations stage" was concluded long ago, after "arduous and time-consuming" endeavours which guarantee that treaty-making will be based on solid foundations. These extended preparations included the following key events:

- On 14 July 1992, President Bush announced a unilateral moratorium on the production of plutonium for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, and he encouraged others to make similar statements. This announcement codified

(Mr. Grey, United States)

circumstances that dated from 1988, when the United States stopped producing plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. Almost a quarter-century before that, in 1964, the United States had ceased to produce highly enriched uranium for this purpose;

– On 16 December 1993, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which called for the negotiation of "a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices";

– On 14 January 1994, the Conference on Disarmament approved the appointment of Canadian Ambassador Gerald Shannon as a special coordinator responsible for conducting consultations and developing a broadly acceptable mandate for negotiations to conclude an FMCT;

– On 4 October 1994, United States Secretary of State Christopher and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian issued a joint statement in which they promoted the "earliest possible achievement" of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons;

– In December 1994, the Russian Federation announced that, as of the previous 1 October, it had stopped producing plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. This complemented an official announcement made on 7 April 1989 that the former USSR would cease the production of highly enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons later that year;

– On 23 March 1995, Canadian Ambassador Shannon reported to the Conference on Disarmament on the consultations he had conducted in 1994 and 1995. He informed the Conference that member States had reached agreement on a negotiating mandate based on General Assembly resolution 48/75 L, and that various views had been expressed in regard to issues that would arise during the negotiations. On the next day, his report was issued as document CD/1299;

– During later stages of the same plenary meeting, the Conference decided to adopt Ambassador Shannon's report and to establish an ad hoc committee to conduct negotiations. Unfortunately, however, the Conference failed to reach agreement on the appointment of a chair, and the FMCT ad hoc committee did not meet that year;

– On 18 April 1995, United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Hurd announced that the United Kingdom had stopped producing fissile material for explosive purposes;

– On 11 May 1995, the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) ended their review and extension conference in New York by adopting a principles and objectives document that called for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of FMCT negotiations;

(Mr. Grey, United States)

- On 22 February 1996, French President Chirac announced that France no longer produced fissile material for use in nuclear weapons;

- On 29 October 1997, the United States and Chinese presidents called for the earliest start of formal negotiations on the prohibition of production of fissile material used in nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices;

- On 11 May 1998, after conducting a series of nuclear tests, India announced that it would participate in the negotiations for the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament;

- On 4 June 1998, after meeting here in Geneva - and, in fact, in this very same room - the Secretary of State of the United States and the Foreign Ministers of China, France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom issued a communique calling for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for a fissile material cut-off convention with a view to reaching early agreement;

- On 30 July 1998 - not last and certainly not least - Ambassador Munir Akram, the distinguished representative of Pakistan, delivered a plenary statement in which he declared that "Pakistan had consistently believed that a ban on the production of fissile materials should be promoted through a universal and non-discriminatory treaty negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament and not through unilateral measures". To this end, he said, Pakistan would join in promoting a decision for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to conduct negotiations;

- On 11 August 1998, the Conference on Disarmament once again decided to establish an ad hoc committee to conduct negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Nine days later, we appointed Canadian Ambassador Mark Moher as Chair;

- On 4 December 1998, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which called for the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish its ad hoc committee at the beginning of the 1999 session;

- On 20 May 2000, the Parties to the NPT ended their review conference in New York by adopting a final document that called for the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations with a view to their conclusion within five years;

- On 20 November 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which called for the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work for the year 2001 that included the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations. This was adopted without a vote.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

Mr. President, after all the announcements made and promises exchanged over quite a number of years, it is time for us to demonstrate our commitment to FMCT negotiations. The concept of a fissile material cut-off treaty is fully mature, and the plan for negotiations has repeatedly been endorsed by the international community. Given all the ample preparations that I have just cited, the Conference will have shown that it is no longer capable of doing anything of consequence if we cannot even begin to negotiate on this issue. And I know that you, Mr. President, as a worthy successor to the commitment and dedication of your distinguished predecessors Gerald Shannon and Mark Moher, will continue to do your utmost for the cause that they championed.

I recently read the transcript of a statement that the official spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation made in Moscow on 29 January 2001. In it, the Ministry's spokesman advocated "the earliest possible achievement of progress in Conference activity, including - on parallel tracks - the start of the work within its framework of the ad hoc committees on weapons grade fissile materials and on talks to prevent an arms race in outer space." The spokesman then went on to state that Russia considers it "of fundamental importance that both committees have a mandate to negotiate."

Now, to the best of my understanding of this unofficial translation from the Russian original, the net implication is that Russia is linking the two issues, specifying the conditions under which it is prepared to undertake work on either. I therefore find it puzzling that, earlier in the same paragraph, the Ministry's spokesman declared: "we condemn the path of interlinkages at the Conference on Disarmament, of converting one issue into the hostage of another." If the Russian Federation really does condemn linkages, this implies that Russia would be willing to support an immediate stand-alone decision to start FMCT negotiations. Perhaps they would be willing to enlighten us on that.

On 14 September 2000, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi, the distinguished representative of China, declared: "the issues of outer space and FMCT cannot but be closely linked." In part, this stemmed from his view that "serious doubt has been cast on the nature and purpose of FMCT negotiations." I wonder, Mr. President, whether this means that China is planning to produce more fissile material for use in nuclear weapons, or just wants to keep that option open. These comments were Delphic on that issue, to say the least. But one point is exceedingly clear: China has made an explicit linkage between FMCT negotiations and negotiations on a new outer space treaty.

Let me shine a spotlight on the views of my own country. The United States does not link the start of FMCT negotiations to anything else. We would be quite willing to join in a decision to launch FMCT negotiations right now, as a step standing by itself and fully justified on its own merits.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

We understand, however, that such a proposal would not command consensus in the Conference. As a compromise, the United States has accepted the basic approach that Ambassador Amorim advanced on 24 August 2000: a comprehensive programme of work that would include negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and organized discussions on issues related to nuclear disarmament and outer space. The overwhelming majority of member States have said that they can accept that, whereas a small number have not yet agreed to do so.

Let me make the net situation perfectly clear. The United States is prepared to agree to a work programme for the Conference on Disarmament that calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and an ad hoc committee on outer space, in the context of active and ongoing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

When we consider outer space on its own merits, seeking to appraise its suitability as a focus for specific work, the contrast with FMCT negotiations is immediate and striking. As many United States representatives have repeatedly emphasized, there is no arms race in outer space, nor any prospect of an arms race for as far down the road as anyone can see. We fully support the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and judge that it, along with a number of other international agreements, is entirely equal to the task of preventing an arms race in outer space. The United States is therefore not persuaded that there is a realistic and current need for further measures aimed at enhancing international peace and security in outer space. To put it quite simply, outer space issues are not ripe for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

We realize that others have different convictions. What we do not understand is why those who do not share our views are unwisely and unrealistically insisting on immediate negotiations on a new outer space treaty, a diplomatic tactic which has the net effect of blocking discussion of the very issues they claim to care about. What are these member States afraid of? Is the current paralysis in the Conference their actual goal? What are they really seeking to achieve? Thanks to these member States, the Conference has not yet started the "pre-negotiation stage" that Mr. Bensmail mentioned in his farewell remarks - the "arduous and time-consuming" work of exploring whether there may be "a shared understanding ... that a security problem exists and that it must be addressed multilaterally."

According to the draft mandate that Ambassador Amorim tabled, members of the Conference would establish an ad hoc committee on outer space to "examine and identify specific topics or proposals." The draft states that such substantive proposals could relate to confidence-building or transparency measures, general principles, treaty commitments, or certain other aspects. For its part, the United States is prepared to participate in an organized discussion aimed at examining those issues - in the context of active and ongoing negotiations on an FMCT.

Outer space is now the home of a wide range of satellites that provide crucial services on economic and commercial levels. In addition, many countries have satellites that provide various types of data for military purposes to ships, aircraft, and ground forces worldwide. These realities will have to be taken into account in any organized discussion of outer space issues. As Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov stated on 1 February 2001, "There are some remedies worse than the disease".

(Mr. Grey, United States)

The United States takes very seriously our obligation stated in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." Since the nuclear arms race ceased quite some time ago, one key benchmark has already been achieved.

Thus far the United States and the Russian Federation have made significant reductions in their nuclear arsenals as the result of negotiated agreements and unilateral initiatives. The substantial reductions called for in START I will be achieved on schedule before the end of the year. When reductions to START II levels have been completed, the United States strategic nuclear arsenal will be only one third as large as it was at the height of the cold war.

The United States remains committed to even further reductions in nuclear arms. President Bush has said the United States should take the lead toward a safer world when it comes to nuclear weaponry. I look forward to reporting on developments in this field as we pursue that goal.

It is exceedingly difficult to believe that the physical security and ultimate fate of hundreds of millions of human beings must for ever be held hostage to the prospect of instant annihilation. This intense irony, this profound paradox was at the core of cold war theories that seem well overdue for an upgrade. Although the new United States administration will review these issues over the coming weeks, it would not be premature to point out that missile defence can enhance strategic stability and further reduce the danger that nuclear weapons will ever be used.

Given the progress achieved thus far and the other factors I have mentioned, what can the Conference actually do to facilitate the long-term process of nuclear disarmament? The single most important step is for member States to decide to launch negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. This, after all, is the only multilateral undertaking related to nuclear disarmament that can actually be negotiated now. Prohibiting the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons is a necessary step on the long-term path toward complete elimination. In addition, by becoming parties to an FMCT, the nuclear-weapon States would accept inspection, monitoring, and reporting requirements that are likely to be far more intrusive than any which apply to them now.

On the other hand, what can member States of the Conference expect to achieve in a separate ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament? We really do not know, and these chronic doubts were closely associated with the long-standing reluctance of the United States to agree to the establishment of such a committee.

On 7 March 2000, Mr. Frank Miller, then serving as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Strategy and Threat Reduction - and he has subsequently gone on, I might report, to a very senior job in the National Security Council - gave an extended briefing in this chamber

(Mr. Grey, United States)

on achievements thus far and United States plans for further reductions in nuclear arms. It was thoroughly rooted in current realities, and it seemed to be well received by those who attended.

After considering this event and its net outcome, the United States Government decided that, as a major step aimed at bringing about agreement on a work programme that included active and ongoing negotiations on an FMCT, the United States could agree to the establishment of an ad hoc committee in which member States would discuss issues related to nuclear disarmament.

In comparison, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov said on 1 February 2001 that Russia supported the idea of establishing "a subsidiary body entrusted with an exploratory mandate for broad discussions on the problem area of nuclear disarmament." Would that be an ad hoc committee along the lines proposed by Ambassador Amorim, or is the Russian delegation supporting something else? Once more, I would welcome enlightenment on this.

As I have already stated, the United States has made yet another adjustment to its strong initial views on the overall work programme of the Conference. In other words, we have agreed with great reluctance to the establishment of an ad hoc committee in which member States will discuss issues related to outer space. And having taken these two important and difficult steps, we have gone as far as we are prepared to go.

Mr. President, I believe that member States are as close as we can ever expect to be to agreement on an overall programme of work. We have been wrestling with this for several years, and it would be exceedingly unwise to let the moment slip away. After all, the proposals we are actively considering owe much to the wisdom and discernment of many prior presidents of eminent stature, including two highly distinguished diplomats who previously served as foreign ministers of their respective countries - Ambassador Dembri of Algeria and Ambassador Amorim of Brazil. My delegation takes their contributions very seriously. Their efforts have clearly identified the kind of work programme that should command consensus.

It is therefore deeply disappointing that the Conference is becoming more and more like England's Long Parliament of the seventeenth century, an irrelevant and anachronistic irritant that clearly became a major part of the problem and not of the solution. Certain delegations accept proposals on the premise that others will reject them and relieve these delegations of the need to do so on their own. Then, when a consensus seems to be emerging, they scuttle back and forth, disavowing what they previously claimed to support while trying to raise the stakes in their favour. Tactical intrigue becomes an end in itself, and the notion of a collective responsibility to make a positive contribution to multilateral arms control is rapidly becoming a distant and fading memory.

It is important to understand that unused attributes and traits may atrophy or even become extinct, and that institutions which do not perform according to just and reasonable expectations may well end up extinguishing themselves. If this Conference takes yet another opportunity to miss an opportunity, this is precisely the risk it will be running.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Grey, for that statement and for your kind words.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize Ambassador Seibert of Germany.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): May I first take this opportunity to thank you for your untiring efforts to resolve the key outstanding issues and to move us forward to substantive work. If this has eluded us, it is certainly not due to a lack of skill or effort.

My delegation could have supported both the original Amorim proposal and your own proposal, and we do believe that intensive consultations on this issue must continue. We are not convinced, however, that the underlying problems outside this Conference can be resolved through further fixes in the so-called Amorim proposal or any variants thereof. It is obvious that a large majority of delegations in this room could accept the Amorim proposal. It is of little help, however, if some delegations can only accept the proposal as a basis for consultations but not as a basis for consensus.

We therefore believe that the time has come to reflect on what useful work the Conference can do until the key outstanding issues have been resolved. It is in this sense that I should like to welcome the initiative by the distinguished Ambassador of Myanmar. We will carefully examine his proposal.

There may be various ways for the Conference to engage in substantive work. My delegation is ready to explore all possible avenues to this end, and we do hope that other delegations will join constructively in this effort.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Ambassador Seibert, for your statement and for your kind words. Are there others who wish to take the floor now? If not, then I take the floor myself.

My presidency of this Conference ends tomorrow, as you know, with my mandate unfulfilled. To be honest, I am not surprised, but I am still disappointed that I have not found it possible to end our impasse, to achieve work programme agreement during my term.

I sought to prepare a recommendation for immediate programmed work on the basis of CD/1624. I calibrated its mandates and I added text to the accompanying statement to try - counter-productively, it turned out - to present the proposal as programming that might conceivably commence and be of value in current circumstances. But neither any effort of mine over the past weeks - nor any other text aired regionally last week - has gained consensus support. Given that words evidently cannot now describe an agreement between parties on the PAROS mandate in CD/1624, work programme consensus is not achievable. Formal programmed work is not on our immediate horizon.

(The President)

Furthermore, my call in our consultations a week ago for suggestions to help close the gap between CD/1624 and consensus provoked not only the rehearsal of PAROS mandate problems but also the reiteration of widespread support for a stronger mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee charged with nuclear disarmament. After our meeting, I reviewed text on how we might address specific steps in dealing with nuclear disarmament with some key parties. They were variously unwilling to consider any change or consider any isolated change whatever. The broader context in which change in the nuclear disarmament mandate and/or other mandates in CD/1624 might be effected consensually will naturally be a subject of intense inquiry for my successors.

Although my efforts have not produced any breakthrough toward consensus, they may have advanced the process of discovery set in train by my predecessors. Among other lessons, we have learned since our opening plenary a month ago that the tight linkages with which we have bound subject to subject and mandate to mandate in CD/1624 are doubly costly. Not only would none of the formal work begin until all of it began, but now, because negotiations and talks are integral parts of CD/1624, and because some parties do not want talks without any negotiations, the linkages in our long-pending proposal threaten to preclude any unprogrammed treatment whatever of any of its subjects, leaving us in the awkward position of wanting to treat substance credibly - without touching fissile material, nuclear disarmament or the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We clearly have more than one knot to escape.

As I said two weeks ago, I think we have learned as well that delegates do not want to pretend here. There is too much at stake for make-believe. Even while they regret that the Conference on Disarmament is restrained by the state of current major power relations, most delegations nonetheless value the Conference's marriage to reality and do not want it freed through divorce, through any sort of make-work. Nor do they want to replicate here much of what they do elsewhere in the Disarmament Commission, in the First Committee or in treaty bodies.

I think we have also learned over the last month that, given current circumstances in major power relations, dominated as they are by doctrinal upheaval and related security declarations and gestures of great sweep, agreement on a work programme for the Conference on Disarmament is not currently possible. Read the papers, if only the headlines. There can be no informed surprise that these are not proving good weeks or months at all to be trying to get major powers to agree to start negotiating a ban on weapons material production, say, or to deal with such currently charged subjects as PAROS and nuclear disarmament - or to launch the rest of CD/1624.

And nor, we know, will work programme agreement prove possible tomorrow morning - or for some time to come. While we will want our president to carry the search forward, ever alert to possibilities to improve CD/1624 as a basis for further intensive consultations, we may decide that the time has come to address the role and work of the Conference in the absence of an agreed work programme, which would mean to seek and define value that the Conference might add to members' shared interests while the search for agreement on a formal work programme goes on.

(The President)

That search for value will preoccupy my successors and all delegations. It will no doubt involve soul-searching, however public, for it must address and credibly answer a string of natural questions:

- In light of its origins, history and evolution, what roles can the Conference on Disarmament play in the search for multilateral security? Negotiation, yes, when parties are willing and ready - but what roles work when they are not?

- What do we mean by "pre-negotiations", "preparations for negotiations", "exploration", "discussion" and other such terms of engagement? What are the prerequisites for success, for valuable work in such treatments of elements of our substantive agenda?

- What is the political role of the Conference? How might its platform be enhanced to increase the influence of its work and the extent of effective engagement which it provides?

- What is the public, informational and educational role of the Conference - as distinct from the outreach of its assembled delegations?

- What value do we recognize in the obvious Conference on Disarmament function of assembling and cross-germinating a unique concentration of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament expertise? For that role alone, what benefits - for the United Nations, for treaty bodies and for other endeavours - ought to be credited to this house?

- Might our group system be made more transparent (lest it hide cheap and anonymous vetoes) and fruitful (with wider sharing of the benefits of group consideration)?

- Although they would not likely promise to be decisive, might procedural and structural reforms be usefully pursued to facilitate negotiations once our global context had permitted their resumption?

- Finally, does it have to be all or nothing around here? Need fallow seasons be such hard times? The rule of consensus is congenital and for ever, we know that; major players will not forsake the brakes that its veto gives them. But when that rule is combined with the regular insistence that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed and when we encounter, as we do these days, a resistance to address any substance informally so long as it pends in CD/1624, the closest thing we have to an agreed programme of work - well, then, our prospects are straitened indeed. How might they be enhanced?

- In sum, if the Conference on Disarmament is not to be used for negotiations for a while, what would constitute a reasonable stewardship programme for the Conference?

(The President)

Ambassador Vega, I do hate to leave such tough questions to you and your successors, but it is not as though I picked off any easy ones myself. There is no low fruit on this tree.

Our world is changing before our eyes as we get over the cold war and face a more complex nuclear future. Real change like today's in our thinking is full of the discomfort of the destruction of well-established assumptions, very hard on old liturgy, but it is also full of new perceptions, possibilities and responsibilities. Certainly, if only for the sake of comprehension, such change is full of work for the likes of us. We need to be energized here, summoned to duty by change and challenge in our field.

I have shared my view of our duty here with you from the start - and, to finish, I urge again that together we use this unique institution as we can to build human solidarity, enough at least, and in time, to avoid for ever what would be the last major no-holds-barred war of our kind. I urge that we use this forum as we can to express the health and the dignity in us, to respect our natural duty to control, contain and eliminate nuclear arsenals. I urge that we use this Conference as we can to seek common ground, to serve interests that we all share, weapon and non-weapon State alike, NPT party and non-party together, States from all the groups and regions, all as one, eye to eye here, gathered to try to serve our security in this Conference with community, with trust and with verified multilateral action - so that we might all feel much less inclined to try to serve it elsewhere with arms.

I am very grateful to all those who have helped me try my best to do my own duty as president well. I thank all you delegates for your unfailing courtesy, for your patient counsel and for all the good will and encouragement you have shared with me. I thank Vladimir Petrovsky, in his absence, and I thank Enrique Román-Morey, at my side, off to such a fine start, and Jerzy Zaleski and the rest of the secretariat team for their thorough professionalism and their constant competence. I thank the translators who make more good sense of what we say than we probably deserve. I thank the officials who gave me time and advice here, in New York and in the capitals which I visited. I thank Petko Draganov and Juan Enrique Vega, with both of whom it has been a pleasure to cooperate. I owe an enormous debt to my constant colleague, Marc Vidricaire, and I thank him, Anouk Lamarre, Johane Coulombe, Nancy Belair and the rest of the Canadian team here and at home, including Scott Proudfoot from Ottawa with us today, for their solidarity and their support.

And I thank my good fortune. Despite the tight straits, presiding over this Conference of you delegates has been an honour that I shall treasure among my memories for the rest of my life.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference, presided over by Ambassador Vega, to whom I wish all good fortune during his term as president, will be held a week today, Thursday, 22 February 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.867
22 February 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 February 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Juan Enrique Vega (Chile)

GE.01-60690 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 867th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I should like, on behalf of us all, warmly to welcome the Director-General for Security and Disarmament in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, His Excellency Mr. Miguel Aguirre de Cárcer, who will be attending our meeting today. I am sure that we all highly appreciate this demonstration of the great importance which the Government of Spain attaches to the Conference, as well as the Director-General's personal commitment to the issue of disarmament.

The Director-General is the only speaker on the list for today. Before giving him the floor, however, I would like first to make an introductory statement on the occasion of the assumption by Chile of the presidency of the Conference.

First I would like to express my gratitude to the outgoing President, Ambassador Christopher Westdal, for the efforts he has made to enable us to get down to work. We have all been witness to his tireless energy in seeking the necessary consensus for adoption of the Conference's programme of work. We have also borne witness to the firm principles to which he has adhered regarding the crucial issues of peace. Accordingly, to our gratitude I should like to add my personal tribute.

You are all well aware of the situation in which we find ourselves. At our plenary meeting last Thursday, Ambassador Westdal gave the Conference an exhaustive analysis of his consultations on the programme of work and vouchsafed some important and thought-provoking conclusions. Among these conclusions, he pointed out the difficulties impeding efforts to achieve agreement on this programme.

Chile is taking on the presidency of the Conference for the first time, having joined the Conference on Disarmament in 1996. My country is convinced of the importance of this body as an instrument whereby the international community can generate better security conditions for all the inhabitants of our planet.

The value that we place on multilateral areas of endeavour is well known. We believe that in such areas humankind has the ability to recognize the principle of the equality of all its members and to show the necessary respect for their values and needs. This is all the more so when the issues that the multilateral world has to address must be accorded a legitimacy that prevails over the logic of force and power.

We have firm convictions in the area of international security and disarmament. These are structured on the basis of the guiding principle of human security and postulate the indivisibility of international security and its prevalence over the security requirements of individual States. As our country has stated before at this same Conference, national security cannot exist in isolation and cannot be invoked to undermine that of others.

(The President)

We are also a member country of the Group of 21, which, in its statements, accords particular importance to nuclear disarmament. For that reason, we are anxious to highlight the validity of the principle of irreversibility both of the nuclear disarmament process and of the control and reduction measures for these weapons and other related armaments, and the need to observe that principle.

Chile is assuming its responsibility to render a service to all members of the Conference and also to its observer States, without prejudice to these clear convictions, which have been made widely manifest through the diplomatic policies that it has consistently applied over the last five years. Hence we shall be speaking less of what we believe, with a view, instead, to remaining very attentive to all of you and to responding faithfully to the general sentiments in this regard.

As I do not belong to the world of disarmament experts, I took pains to review the records of earlier years. I believe that it is very difficult to be original on issues that have been addressed by all presidents upon assuming this brief but intense mandate. Indeed, these problems have been with us for some time now.

The Conference is locked in a stalemate that cannot be protracted indefinitely without damaging its credibility and effectiveness. We know that the responses with regard to the approval of the programme of work must, by and large, stem from the international community around us, but at the same time we must ask whether the Conference itself has any power to influence that community.

That said, if the international community has provided itself with an international forum to negotiate disarmament issues, this is because it deemed it necessary to establish a global forum where decisions are taken collectively. In other words, the existence of the Conference meets the need for a collective response to the requirements of planetary stability and security, which are also of a global nature.

In this challenge, the entire international community has both rights and obligations, since the preservation of our common heritage is at stake. Hence the members of the Conference have borne primary responsibility for the fate of this forum, whose existence and effectiveness we are all anxious to safeguard because it forms part of a process which is not easy to replicate and whose development we must ensure, to ensure that it keeps pace with the times.

This does not mean that the President of the Conference on Disarmament should shirk his duties. Quite the contrary, today more than ever he must be at the Conference's service, making his best efforts to help find a solution to the situation which confronts us. This is on the understanding that it would be difficult for the President to do or go beyond what the parties wish. In other words, his role as a facilitator should be understood in the context of the autonomy of the will of the Conference's members.

(The President)

No president can take upon himself a responsibility that is common to all. The stalemate affecting the programme of work is a problem shared by us all and one that I cannot tackle alone. We must all make efforts to make progress.

We shall be doing this on the basis of document CD/1624, which represents the culmination of a negotiating process and textual fine-tuning that has brought us close to consensus. The Amorim proposal, which, as stated by the 2000 report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly, has the support of a Conference "as a basis for further intensified consultations", represents a political legacy which we shall carefully preserve. It is the best expression of a process which has involved most of the presidents of the Conference of recent years. My mandate consists in pursuing those consultations and I thank all the groups and China that have expressed support for this approach.

We shall also explore any ideas relating to complementary actions, taken in addition to the main effort, which would enable us to tap fully the resources of the Conference. I must, however, tell you that expressions such as "plan A" or "plan B", graphic and attractive though they be, have the danger of leading us to think that these are alternative options. I believe that, in reality, we have before us just one destination - the programme of work. Accordingly, I would prefer to talk about complementary actions and to see these as tributaries to the main river, which is the programme of work.

We shall endeavour to listen to all and to consult with all. We shall try out new formulae and approaches to give effect to our consultations. We believe in the democratization of international organizations and we shall make transparency and openness our main working tool.

Finally, I would like to make one last comment, with all due respect, on the efforts that have been made and are still being made here. To me, a newcomer, while I waited in that long queue that leads countries and, owing to vagaries of the alphabet, certain ambassadors, as in my case, to the presidency, the situation which we were experiencing seemed comparable to that described by an anarchist Spanish historian when recounting the history of cities. According to him, people discussed and discussed for century upon century, until one day, by consensus, they decided to found the first city.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Miguel Aguirre de Cárcer.

Mr. AGUIRRE DE CARCER (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Allow me to begin by saying how pleased I am to see you presiding over this body. I know that, in the esteemed diplomatic tradition of your country, with which Spain has long-standing and close relations, and by drawing on your extensive political and professional experience, you will do everything possible to bring this difficult task to a satisfactory conclusion. I would also like to extend my thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Westdal of Canada, for his efforts and to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, the new Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Román Morey, and through them all the staff in the secretariat, who help us so ably with our work.

(Mr. Aguirre de Cárcer, Spain)

Sir, my presence here today, at a time that I would venture to term critical for the Conference, is prompted by compelling and specific reasons. First of all, it responds to our wish to restate the resolute commitment of Spain to the universal and multilateral character of disarmament and arms control that is represented by this body. Spain became a member of the Conference in 1996, after many years on the waiting list, and over the last 25 years it has significantly strengthened its commitment to the various disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes. This commitment represents one of the main pillars of our security policy.

Spain signalled its renunciation of nuclear weapons by joining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1986 and the entire system of guarantees and safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, including the relevant additional protocol. Having ratified it on 31 July 1998, we are now also a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we are the eighth largest contributor to the budget of the organization established under that treaty. Moreover, by sovereign decision of our parliament, Spain is a denuclearized territory and this, in our view, is a major contribution to stability not only in Europe and the Mediterranean but also in the world at large.

Speaking now from a regional, European point of view, Spain has been participating actively in the extensive process to remodel the continent's security structure that has been under way over the last 30 years or so. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and various mechanisms established in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in particular the Vienna Document on confidence and security-building measures and the Open Skies Treaty, and the creation of a common security and defence policy in the context of the European Union, are constituent parts of a collective security concept that has enabled us to reduce to a minimum the risks inherent in the overwhelming geopolitical changes sweeping across the continent since the end of the so-called cold war.

The international landscape against which we are deploying our continued efforts to weave the international legal fabric for arms control is one of particular complexity. Both the challenges that have arisen over recent years to the non-proliferation regime and the rapid evolution of the various strategic visions condition, if not impede, the process of global disarmament. These new factors and the concerns which they provoke must be approached in a spirit of peace and security, in accordance with our obligations under the United Nations Charter.

This, therefore, is the backdrop for the work of our Conference. In the words of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his message to the Conference at the beginning of this session, the full use of the Conference on Disarmament as a negotiating forum requires "restoring a necessary degree of harmony among the main players. Only then will the Conference be able to strike the right balance between the disarmament priorities of all member States".

The difficulties notwithstanding, we should recall that, over the last few months, various positive events have occurred of considerable importance, including the holding of the

(Mr. Aguirre de Cárcer, Spain)

Millennium Summit last year, that should facilitate the entire process of multilateral disarmament negotiations with which we are concerned and, more particularly, should give our Conference the political impetus that it needs.

Special mention should be made of the NPT Review Conference in 2000. My country attaches special importance to the Final Document of the Review Conference, adopted by consensus of all the participating member States, which is of particular value because it underpins the nuclear non-proliferation regime and at the same time reaffirms the validity of its basic principles, revitalizing the commitment to nuclear disarmament of the nuclear-weapon States.

Among the practical steps identified in the Final Document for the application of article VI of the Treaty, particular note should be taken of the third step, which urges the Conference on Disarmament to take immediate action by starting negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, with a view to the conclusion of these negotiations within five years.

Moreover, paragraph 4 is also significant for the Conference on Disarmament because it calls for the immediate establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament, something that we believe to be of great importance for our work here.

This step forward is, in our view, of great significance but it is not the only progress made in 2000. We also welcome the long-awaited ratification by the Russian Federation of the START II Treaty as well as the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by 17 more countries. We also hope that the number of ratifications of the Treaty will increase before the second Conference of the States provided for under article XIV of the Treaty, because the entry into force of this Treaty must continue to be a priority for the international community.

We should also highlight the progress that has occurred in other spheres of multilateral negotiation, such as the speeding up of negotiations on a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. This is a sine qua non for transforming the Convention of 1972 into a truly effective instrument. The deadline that we ourselves have set for its adoption, namely, the fifth review conference scheduled for the end of this year, must be respected, so as not to lose the current momentum. My country will certainly continue to contribute by all means within its reach to the attainment of this very important objective.

The issue of global conventional disarmament has also acquired growing importance, in view of its extensive humanitarian ramifications, given the very widespread use of conventional arms in the many conflicts that, regrettably, are afflicting the world today. The Convention on Prohibitions or Restriction on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Injurious Effects also plays an important role and the possible adoption in the near future of a fifth protocol, on the explosive debris of war, will lend this instrument even greater weight. The regime established by this Convention has now been

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surpassed by the Ottawa Convention, however, which prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of landmines, mandating their destruction. Spain is a party to the Ottawa Convention and is strictly complying with all its commitments, including the destruction of all its landmines. This exercise was completed in November 2000. Spain is also actively cooperating in this area with the Ibero-American region.

Finally, mention must be made in this context of the important current initiatives to avoid the destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons. Along with the already existing regional instruments, in particular that adopted in November 2000 by OSCE, Spain is actively working to ensure that the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will result in an effective action plan encompassing all aspects of the problem of these weapons.

Notwithstanding these achievements, our Conference continues to come up against obstacles, familiar to us all, which prevent it from resuming its substantive work. Where Spain is concerned, the Conference on Disarmament is a unique forum that should permit all countries that so wish to participate in the discussion and negotiation of regimes for the control and elimination of weapons of mass destruction, because the risks entailed by these weapons pose a threat to us all.

Given all this, we believe that the Conference is an indispensable body at the current time. Not only does it have among its assets the preparation over the last two decades of key instruments for the control of weapons of mass destruction, such as the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, but also, in its previous format, laid the foundations for international collective security in the second half of the twentieth century, attaining such decisive agreements as the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our firm support for the efforts that you and your predecessors have been making to launch a new phase of productive work in the Conference. My delegation already said at the end of the last session that it was in full agreement with the proposal made last year by Ambassador Celsor Amorim of Brazil, on which further work has been done during consultations held over the last few weeks. This proposal is the outcome of many months of effort and builds on work carried out during 2000 by your predecessors, especially by Ambassador Dembri and Ambassador Lint, and it is seen by the Spanish delegation not only as a sound basis on which we should continue to work, but as totally acceptable in all respects. Not all delegations here share that view, however, and it is therefore incumbent upon you and all of us member countries to make every effort to achieve a programme of work that will respect our own priorities and live up to the expectations of the international community.

Mr. President, my country believes that there is a very real risk of this Conference becoming marginalized if it continues in its current deadlock, which would have extremely grave consequences for the entire system of multilateral cooperation. I therefore assure you,

(Mr. Aguirre de Cárcer, Spain)

Mr. President, that my delegation will spare no effort to ensure that we come up, at the earliest possible stage, with a programme of work agreed by consensus, which will support you in the complex task that lies ahead of you.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Director-General for Security and Disarmament, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, for his statement and for the very kind words addressed to the Chair.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor?

Our work for today is thus concluded. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 1 March 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.868
1 March 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 1 March 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Juan Enrique Vega (Chile)

GE.01-60735 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 868th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I should like warmly to welcome, on behalf of the Conference, Ambassador Eui-Yong Chung, the newly appointed permanent representative of the Republic of Korea. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Ambassador and to convey my best wishes for his work in this Conference and I look forward to close cooperation with him.

On my list I have the Ambassador of Belgium, Mr. Jean Lint.

Mr. LINT (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on acceding to what is a thankless but nonetheless fascinating position as President of the Conference. Please be assured that you can rely on full cooperation from Belgium in your endeavour to bring the Conference out of its three-year-old impasse.

I take the floor today as the co-chair of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Landmines, otherwise known as the Ottawa Convention. Today's date - 1 March - is of particular significance for the Convention, since it marks the second anniversary of its entry into force, the fortieth ratification - that of Burkina Faso - having occurred on 1 March 1999. To date, with the recent ratification by Zambia, 111 States have ratified the Convention. Needless to say, this shows the remarkable progress achieved by the Convention in moving towards universal status and, in this context, I would like to encourage all States not yet parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for your statement and for the kind remarks addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? There are no other speakers on my list for today and no other delegation wishes to take the floor.

Distinguished delegates, as you know since I took office as President, I have been holding intensive consultations with many of the delegations here. I have not yet completed this task and I intend to continue it next week. So far my efforts to come up with a consensus programme for this Conference have been to no avail. I must also be very candid and concede that the chances of getting this consensus are very slim. I am, however, making every effort to discharge the mandate I have been given, which is to take the proposal by Ambassador Amorin - the so-called "Amorin proposal" - as the basis for our current intensive consultations. To date I have no news for you, however. I hope that next week we shall be able to get to work and that I will be able to give you a detailed and precise report on the course of these consultations and on their outcome. At that time we shall see the measure of our success and, if there is no success, can decide what our next steps should be.

That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 8 March 2001, at 10 a.m.